

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
 ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA  
 CENTRAL  
 ARCHÆOLOGICAL  
 LIBRARY

ACCESSION NO. 10004

CALL No. 901.0954 *Hyp*

D.G.A. 79.











FIG. 1. THE TAJ MAHAL, City of Agra (see description Chap. XXII). This is considered by many the most beautiful structure ever created by the hand of man.



# SPOTLIGHTS *on the* CULTURE OF INDIA

10004

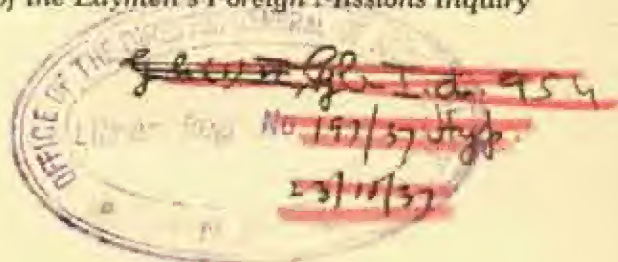
by

JAMES LOWELL HYPES, Ph. D.

*Professor of Sociology, Connecticut State College*

*and formerly*

*Member of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*



901.0954  
Hyp

THE DAYLION COMPANY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1937

Copyright, 1937  
by  
JAMES LOWELL HYPER

CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
LIBRARY, NEW DELHI.

Acc. No. 1937.4

Date. 20.4.1959

Call No. 901.0954/HYP



*To my wife,*  
CORA EDNA JACKSON HYPES  
*this book is affectionately*  
*inscribed*





SPOTLIGHTS  
ON THE CULTURE OF INDIA

158153





## P R E F A C E

**India a Land of World-Interest.** India, because she is a land of appealing interest, has been the subject of a vast number of books. Yet the number of books grows and will doubtless continue to grow as western scholars learn to know better the varied culture and the latent powers of this country, and as her own scholars rediscover the lofty ideals and the artistic abilities so characteristic of the days of the early kings and the Mogul Emperors. The fact that India has produced some of the world's greatest architecture, literature, and philosophy, and has given birth to some of the world's greatest living religions, appeals to scholars in every land. And the more obvious externals of her civilization as expressed in her modes of dress, travel, home-making, vocational employment, and other folkways peculiar to the East, likewise encourage earnest western students to study the deep-lying things of the mind and the spirit of which such folkways are but the interest-provoking externals. Thus it is not strange that scholars the world over are paying a tribute of interest and respect to a civilization whose cultural history extends from the present back into the mists of antiquity.

**Objectives of the Present Study.** In view of the scholarly works on Indian culture that have been produced, and in view of the vastness and complexity of India, it is with a feeling of humility that the present volume has been attempted. But the writer, like many others who have had a close and realistic view of contemporary Indian society, has been greatly challenged by India's cultural history and the place of potential usefulness of this culture in the society of nations; so, for the benefit of western scholars who have not had reason or opportunity to make a special study of India, he has attempted to give an interpretative description of some of the more obvious aspects of Indian life, as seen by a traveller to that country. During the year 1930-31, as sociologist on the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, he visited many

cities and villages throughout the various sections of India, including numerous places of historical and cultural interest. This itinerary also included conferences with educators, medical men, public officials, and Christian missionaries, both national and foreign. The challenging experiences received during this first-hand study, supplemented by the reading of a vast number of books on India and considerable correspondence with friends who are either now in India or who have spent some time there, have furnished the factual materials for this book.

**Difficulties Encountered in the Study.** In writing this volume, the author has faced a number of serious problems. Yet however difficult the task, whether dealing in facts or playing with fancy, this has been a labor of joy in the growing understanding of the country which is the subject of the succeeding chapters. India, geographically and socially, is so vast and complex that the writing of such an account as this requires a fullness of knowledge that is difficult for one person to command. Furthermore, the account is hard to relate without weighting down one's story with an endless number of provisos and exceptions. Thus it is so easy to "select" one's facts in a biased manner that one is in constant danger of dealing in half-truths and of wandering far from the main paths. This difficulty has been recognized repeatedly in the chapters which follow, almost to the danger-point of wearying the reader. But the writer has sought to be open-minded and fair to all concerned, and has tried to avoid the appearance of being an advocate of any particular cause or theory. In order to do this he has kept an eye on the deeper meanings of the data dealt with, has consulted other writers, and has made numerous comparisons between India and the countries of the West.

Obviously, a complete interpretation of contemporary Indian society would be impossible to accomplish in a single volume. Thurston and Rangachari's description of the origin and the folkways of the castes and tribes of Southern India, alone, consists of seven large volumes, and an equally scholarly treatment of many other aspects of contemporary Indian life might well approach similar proportions. Thus it must be clearly recognized that, at best, the present volume can be but selective and partial in its treatment of the subject, for there are other facets of Indian society not touched upon here, or treated only very casually, that might well be the subject of separate chapters. These include the Indian City, the Industrialization of India, Indian Literature, Indian Folklore, Ritualism in Indian Life, National Political Problems, Crime and Its Punishment, Settlement Houses in Urban



Slum Areas, Social Reconstruction among the Rural Villages, the Conflict between Oriental and Western Cultures, India's Culture Gifts to the World, and others. Therefore, the writer seeks the indulgence of the artist, the statesman, the agricultural specialist, the educator, the theologian, the medical man, the ethnographer, the zoologist, and others who may find their fields of interest so superficially touched upon or passed over altogether. He freely acknowledges that it requires the combined efforts of many different kinds of scholars to round out a satisfactory description of contemporary Indian society.

In the writing of an account of India's culture, one meets another difficulty quite as serious as that of encompassing the complex situation which that country presents. It is that of maintaining a mental balance. Because of inadequate knowledge, bias, or lack of training in scientific thinking, both the reader and the writer on Indian subjects are in danger of becoming sentimental and emotional. The average westerner in approaching the Orient and knowing as little about it as the average westerner usually knows, is likely to note such profound apparent differences between the cultures of the East and the West as will stir his emotions. On the one hand, he may see the country as a veritable Utopia; on the other hand, he may be critical. In neither case is he likely to see the real India. If one is chauvinistic in his outlook, he will approach the Orient in a spirit of superiority which at once defeats the purpose of a quest for the understanding of oriental cultures. The flowing oriental garments, or even the lack of clothing in certain cases, the small bazaars which he unwittingly may contrast with the fashionable shops of New York and Paris, the slums of the cities and villages with their dirt, teeming populations, and livestock, the ubiquitous shrines and temples, the beggars, the pilgrims, the holy men, the lepers, the snakes and wild animals, and the various other sights that even a short visit to India will present, are likely to confirm the traveller from the West in his belief in the cultural superiority of the West. He may overlook the imposing beauty of the numerous great temples, hoary with age, throughout the land; he may pay slight attention to the many beautiful highways which are lined with great banyans, tamarinds, and other shade-giving trees; he may view with scant appreciation the numerous lakes that grace the countryside of certain sections, and he may see in the clouds that cap the peaks of the majestic Himalayas merely added reasons for encumbering himself with rain apparel. And the leisurely gliding here and there of a cobra or house lizard, or the nocturnal yapping of the jackals, may only



arouse in him the desire to slay, or if he be a more timorous soul, to flee for his life.

If a traveller is so unappreciative of the more obvious and more tangible things which make up contemporary Indian civilization, he is likely to be even less appreciative of the intangibles of her civilization. To him, the religious zeal which causes men to go on long and hazardous pilgrimages to holy places, or which causes men to lead the ascetic lives of the sadhus and priests, may seem but a mark of stupid fanaticism; the numerous shrines and temples found throughout the country, the serene statues of the Buddha, the artistic representations of Krishna and his flute, the various expressions of reverence for the cow,—all may appear to him but implements of abject and degrading idolatry. There is ample room, in fact, for some of the adverse criticism which such an observer may make of contemporary India, but the more fully initiated will also see in some of these phenomena the normal adjustments of a great people to the requirements of a tropical climate. The understanding observer will see in other phenomena the outward fruits of an intensely religious life exemplifying serenity and unworldliness which the poet Tagore interprets as "An abiding sense of the Infinite."

The kindly, yet critical, Hindu philosopher, on the other hand, may challenge our bewildered critic from the West by reminding him how much the West needs to grow in serenity and spiritual power. He may also remind him of the venality of western civilizations, particularly American, as expressed in a lust for economic profit and in the gross mismanagement so frequently found in city governments; and finally he may refer to the ghastly self-inflicted holocaust of death wrought among so-called Christian nations by the recent Great War. Evidently a spirit of humility and unbiased inquiry is needed in order to assess adequately the cultural accomplishments of any people, whether they be occidental, oriental, or dwellers among the far-away islands of the sea.

**Acknowledgments.** In conclusion, the writer has not depended wholly upon his own observations for facts, but has drawn freely upon others, as indicated by the documentation accompanying each major group of topics discussed. But the chapters containing the body of the factual materials have been followed by one or more other chapters less factual and more interpretative in nature, with the aim of elucidating the factual material and of giving, within the limits imposed by the task, as clear and truthful interpretations as possible of contemporary Indian culture.

Most of these bibliographical references are recorded as they

occur in the chapters, but with a sense of deep gratitude the writer wishes formally to recognize here some of the sources of information quoted most frequently: The University of Chicago Press for permission to use parts of a chapter formerly prepared by the writer on Mohammedanism in India, and appearing in *Social Problems and Social Processes*, under the editorship of Emory S. Bogardus; the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry for permission to draw upon certain materials prepared by the writer for Volume IV of its *Report on India and Burma*; Dr. Robert Ernest Hume of Union Theological Seminary, New York, formerly a missionary in India and professor in a number of Indian universities, and his publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons, for permission to use certain classifications and other materials in *The World's Living Religions*, for the chapter on Hinduism and Its Offshoots; the Literary Guild of America, New York, and William Heinemann, Ltd., London, for certain poetical materials included in the chapter on the Music of India; Dr. J. A. Chapman, of the State Library, Rampura State, U. P., India, and his publisher, the Oxford University Press, for material from *Vaishnava Lyrics* for inclusion in the chapter on the Music of India; Dr. F. K. Richtmyer, Dean of the Graduate School of Cornell University, and Dr. William H. Wiser, for permission to use certain materials from Dr. Wiser's dissertations written at Cornell University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's and Doctor's degrees at that institution, and as yet unpublished; E. P. Dutton & Co. for permission to use portions of Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji's books, *Gay Neck*, and *Hari the Jungle Lad*, in the chapter on the Indian Cow, and elsewhere; Dr. William J. McKee of the University of North Carolina, and his publisher the University of North Carolina Press, for certain materials gleaned from his *Developing a Project Curriculum for the Village Schools of India*; Dr. Mason Olcott, and his publisher the Y.M.C.A. Press, for materials taken from his *Village Schools of India*; Prof. Ira Hatch of the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Rev. D. J. Lichty of Anklesvar, and Prin. J. L. Goheen of Sangli, all three of India, for photographs used in the illustrations of this book; Government of India, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, for the map and certain other illustrations used in this book; J. H. Furneaux, Sub-Editor of the Times of India, for two illustrations gleaned from *Glimpses of India*; Mrs. Rudyard Kipling, and Doubleday, Doran and Co. for permission to use certain extracts from Kipling's *Barack-Room Ballads*; Professor Leslie B. Sipple, Dean of the College of Education of the Municipal University of Wichita, Kansas, and formerly a member of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry in India, for reading the chapter on Indian Schools; Dr. Sam Higgin-



bottom, President of Allahabad Christian College, India, for furnishing information for the chapter on the Mela; Miss Marion B. Gardner, instructor of applied art at Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, and a student of oriental art, for reading the chapter on Indian Art; the British Library of Information of New York City, for reading the chapter on Indian Government and other sections of the manuscript; Rev. George Ackerly of Mansfield Center, Connecticut, formerly a missionary to India, for reading the entire manuscript; Dr. Walter Brooks Foley of Oyster Bay, Long Island, for a number of years an educator and editor in India, for reading the manuscript in its entirety, for writing the chapter on Contemporary Social Movements and Emergent Leadership in India, and for furnishing certain translations for the chapter on the Music of India, as well as other data used elsewhere; Mary Rosengrant Foley, a gifted student of Indian music, for writing the chapter on the Music of India; Dr. Helena F. Miller of the Normal School, Willimantic, Connecticut, for editorial assistance; my wife, Cora Edna Jackson Hypes for assistance in various phases of the project; and the scores of people of India, both nationals and foreigners, who gave freely of their knowledge and their time to assist the writer to understand better India and her people.

CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE,  
STORRS, CONNECTICUT,

OCTOBER 7, 1936

JAMES LOWELL HYPES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface .....	7
 <b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	
Ch. I. India and Her People .....	19
II. Travelling in India .....	30
III. Among the Clouds of Darjeeling .....	41
 <b>II. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND FOLKWAYS</b>	
Ch. IV. Indian Government .....	51
V. Indian Schools .....	68
VI. The Indian Village .....	91
VII. The Indian Caste System .....	114
VIII. The Indian Family .....	131
IX. The Women of India .....	146
 <b>III. ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES</b>	
Ch. X. Indian Agriculture:	
The Agricultural Situation .....	163
XI. Farm Income and Standards of Living .....	178
XII. Indian Markets .....	187
XIII. Social and Cultural Factors	
Affecting the Economic Life of India .....	197
XIV. The Indian Cow .....	211
XV. The Wild Animals of India .....	220
 <b>IV. RELIGIONS AND ARTS</b>	
Ch. XVI. Hinduism and Its Offshoots .....	229
XVII. Islam in India .....	241
XVIII. Christian Missions .....	253
XIX. Indian Pilgrims and Pilgrimages .....	267
XX. The Indian Mela .....	278
XXI. Indian Art .....	291
XXII. Indian Art (continued) .....	301
XXIII. The Music of India .....	315
 <b>V. CONCLUSION</b>	
Ch. XXIV. Contemporary Social Movements and	
Emergent Leadership in India .....	333
XXV. An Afterthought .....	357
Index .....	363





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures	Facing Page
I. THE TAJ MAHAL, FRONTISPIECE .....	<i>Title Page</i>
II. PLACES OF NATURAL BEAUTY .....	16
III. METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION .....	32
IV. VIEWS OF THE HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS .....	64
V. PUBLIC BUILDINGS .....	44
VI. TYPES OF SCHOOLS .....	52
VII. INDIAN HOMES .....	68
VIII. FACTORS THAT TEND TO REDUCE CASTE DISTINCTION: RAILWAYS, SCHOOLS .....	92
IX. A HINDU WEDDING PARTY .....	104
X. WOMEN TYPES .....	120
XI. WOMEN'S WORK .....	128
XII. AGRICULTURAL METHODS (A): HERDING, THRESHING, HARVESTING .....	160
XIII. AGRICULTURAL METHODS (B): LIFTING WATER .....	168
XIV. INDIAN MARKETS .....	184
XV. A HINDU BURNING GHAT, CALCUTTA .....	192
XVI. WILD ANIMALS OF INDIA .....	224
XVII. INDIAN TEMPLES (A): GOLDEN TEMPLE AT BENARES, AND OTHERS .....	232
XVIII. CHRISTIAN MISSION VILLAGE CHURCHES .....	248
XIX. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY HOMES .....	256
XX. INDIAN PILGRIMS .....	288
XXI. INDIAN TEMPLES (B): CARVING .....	296
XXII. WORK AND WORSHIP .....	312
XXIII. INDIAN TEMPLES (C): SHWE DAGON PAGODA .....	344
XXIV. LEADERSHIP IN HEALTH WORK: THE SCUDDER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL .....	350





FIG. 11. PLACES OF NATURAL BEAUTY. 1. Mowbray Road, Madras; 2. A loop on the Darjeeling and Himalayan Railway; 3. A lake near the Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranipet.





PART I

INTRODUCTION



## *Chapter I*

### INDIA AND HER PEOPLE

#### *The Country*

**Size and Location.** India, in fact, is a great sub-continent. The great size of India is largely responsible for its variations in climate and soil, hence in certain social and economic conditions as well. But a casual look at the map is likely to cause the average student of geography, particularly if he knows but little about that country, to underestimate its size. Its greatest length from north to south, and its greatest breadth from east to west, is each about 1,900 miles; and its area, including Burma, is 1,805,000 square miles, or roughly three-fifths the area of continental United States. India also extends from the 8th degree north latitude to the 37th degree north, and thereby has a rich and varied natural scenery because of a climate varying from a tropical climate to a very cold climate among the snow-clad heights of the Himalaya Mountains at the north. One who makes a quick trip from Madras or some other southern city to some point in Kashmir or Bhutan which extend up among the Himalayas, will soon discover these extremes of temperature.

Reference to the map of India also shows that it is the middle of three irregular peninsulas which jut southward from the mainland of Asia. Its form is that of a great triangle with its base resting upon the lofty Himalayan Range of mountains and its apex running far into the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, separating the Arabian Sea on the west from the Bay of Bengal on the east. On the northwest are Persia and Afghanistan; on the north and east are the Chinese Republic and the Kingdom of Siam.

**Physical Divisions.** The empire included within these boundaries, geologically and physically, consists of three fairly distinct regions,—the Himalayas, the Indo-Ganges Plain, and the Peninsula proper. The Himalayan region rises ultimately into the great



Himalayan Range, the highest in the world, the peaks of which, according to Stoddard, are as high as the Pyrenees Mountains piled upon the Alps, with 4,000 feet to spare. From the melting snows and glaciers of this general region arise the Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Ganges, and other rivers of historical note. This vast range of mountains crowning the northern boundary of the empire also forms a natural barrier to the passage of armies or trade caravans. Some of the ancient trade routes from northern India to Turkestan and Tibet go through mountain passes over 18,000 feet high; and it is at the Khyber Pass and other strategical points in that general region that British soldiers are stationed today to protect India from the raids of the Kurdish tribes beyond the northwest frontier.

The plains region, extending roughly from the Bay of Bengal on the east to the Arabian Sea and the Afghan frontier on the west, contains the richest and most densely populated provinces of the empire. Here, in places, the density of population reaches 1,100 or more per square mile. But the soil of this general area is very productive, no borings having reached the base of the alluvium in the rich river valleys of this region. A boring at Calcutta pierced a bed of peat and wood about 360 feet below sea-level, and a boring at Lucknow reached a point nearly 1,000 feet below sea-level without reaching the base of the silt deposit.<sup>1</sup>

The third division, or southern tablelands, composes the major portion of the peninsula proper. This area includes the Central Provinces and Berar, the Madras and the Bombay Presidencies, Hyderabad, Mysore, and other states. The eastern and western sides of this elevated triangle are known as the Eastern and the Western Ghats. From these ghats fragmentary spurs of mountains recede inland, and broad level tracts extend between their bases and the coast. Some of the elevations of these ranges reach the height of 8,760 feet, and the enclosed plateau lies from 1,000 to 3,000 feet above the sea. This plateau is dotted with peaks, of which the Nilgiri Hills are some of the better known. On going from Bombay on the western coast to Nagpur, the capital of the Central Provinces, one can easily note the change in the temperature owing to the change in elevation.

Of the three regions of India briefly described, the first, or Himalayan, lies to the north and largely beyond the British frontier; but a knowledge of it is important to an understanding of the ethnology and history of India. The second region, or the great river plains in the north, formed the theatre of the ancient race

<sup>1</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, pp. 150-155.



movements which determined the subsequent destinies of the whole Indian peninsula. The third region of the triangular tableland in the south differs from both of the other divisions greatly as to the racial composition of its people, language, and folkways.

**How Geographical Factors Affect the People.** The geography of India, though interesting in itself, becomes even more significant when studied in its effects upon the people. The geographical determinists have long since noted the effect of soil, topography, climate, the presence or the absence of water and other natural resources, upon the movements of peoples, their manners and customs, and their social and economic problems as well. We shall not at this time try to do more than select a few examples to illustrate this part of our story.

The seasons of India are roughly divided into the dry or winter season, and the monsoon or wet season; yet, counting the graduations between these two major seasons, India has some half-dozen seasons. Varying somewhat with the different parts of the country, the dry season lasts from about the middle of October or later until the middle of May or June. The temperature in most of India during the first part of this period is mild, yet warm enough to make light-weight clothing very desirable. The chief crops grown during this season are known as the winter or *rabi* crops, while those mainly grown during the monsoon or summer season are known as the *khariff* crops. These crops will be discussed more fully in a later chapter on the agriculture of India.

In parts of India during the summer season the mercury rises to 125 degrees F. in the shade, and a hot wind blows with a force and a shrillness that reminds one of the winter winds of our own northern climates. These winds, however, feel like the breath of a blast furnace, and during their prevalence much of the vegetation turns sear and black as if scorched by fire. Potted plants in the homes of the Europeans and the wealthy Indians are removed to shelter, and the doors and windows on the windward side of the houses are closed so as to prevent the entrance of the hot winds and the clouds of fine dust carried by them. Even then, unless extreme caution has been observed, upon the return of people from their summer vacations in the hill stations or abroad, their furniture will be completely covered with fine dust and grit. Most of the dwellings of the wealthier classes and the offices of the business men have electric fans, when such can be installed, or at least the *punkah*, a cloth stretched over a long frame hung overhead and pulled back and forth by means of a rope in the hands of a cooly. Bamboo or grass matting, constantly kept wet by a cooly, is also

frequently lowered over windows and doors so as to cool the air in the rooms through the process of evaporation. However, most westerners who can possibly arrange to do so, whether missionaries, government officials or business men, go either to the hill stations in India, or abroad, during the hottest part of the summer. Frequently the women and the children remain away longer than the men, so that families are sometimes separated for long periods of time. Because of the difficult climate, the scarcity of food suited to infants and young children in interior India, and for other reasons, some of the Europeans met in our travels were leaving their children with relatives, or in special homes or schools in the home lands. One missionary couple we met had not seen their son and daughter for ten years!

Climate has other effects upon the mode of life that ultimately become interwoven into the culture complex of the people. The common and the poorer classes often, even during the winter months in South India, sleep in the open near their mud huts, or under thatched sheds on the cooler sides of their huts. The traveller who passes by late in the evening or at night may see groups of men, women, and children, clustered about the entrance to their huts, under trees, thatched sheds, or out under the open skies squatting about listlessly or stretched out in grotesque fashion in peaceful slumber. In the cities people often lie out in the street covered only with a flimsy body cloth. I recall on a tour through a poorer section of the city of Bombay one night in early November seeing the people asleep in the streets among the cattle which stood quietly by or lay at rest, settled for the night.

Such conditions give rise to weird stories. Tales are sometimes told of the cobra or the scorpion creeping under the scant bedding of these sleepers, and of how when the sleeper, through a change in position, disturbs the intruder, he is struck, to his great discomfort, or fatally if the visitor is a cobra. It is estimated that poisonous snakes alone are responsible yearly for 22 to 25 thousand deaths in India. Fantastic stories are also frequently related of how wild beasts have stolen into the midst of a group of sleepers and carried off an infant, or how a jackal suffering with rabies has gone at night from hut to hut biting a large number of people and live stock. Fantastic stories are told of how goblins or evil spirits have raided a village at night to carry off a child or lamb, or to bring to the group some sore affliction in the form of pestilence or the marauding of thieves.

More pleasing aspects of the story may be related, however. Often the traveller, when passing through these villages at night, can hear, gathered under a great banyan tree or in a hut, the voices



of many singers, the thumping sound of the *dholak*, or drum, and the rhythmic singsong of the harmonium and cymbals. As a people, the Indians love to sing, and put much dramatic fervor into their musical festivals. It seems to the writer that the student of cultural anthropology, and the writer of folk-lore and fairy stories, would find the village group at evening, the stopping places of the roving gypsy clans, and the camps of the camel and bullock caravans, most interesting and fruitful sources of material. The fact is that such writers as Dhan Gopal Mukerji, A. Appasamy, P. V. J. Ayyar, and others have made valuable contributions through the collection and recording of folk-lore garnered from India's vast storehouse of tradition and custom.

We might well make a brief summary of the ways in which geographical factors affect the people of India by quoting from a native scholar: "In Europe long cold winters, barren soil and conflict of interests between small countries have developed in the Aryans there the 'instinct of self-preservation' to the highest pitch and made them comparatively more active, combative, and enterprising; the peculiar environmental conditions of India have tended to make her people, *Aryans and all*, more passive, meditative, and philosophical." And the permanency of the social effects of these geographical factors has been noted by Huntington in these words: "Perhaps they [the African negroes, the South American Indians, and the East Indians] will change, but the fact that the Indians both of Asia and South America have been influenced so little by from one to four hundred years of contact with the white man affords little ground for hope."

**The Monsoon A Social Determinant.** The monsoon is a determinative factor of pivotal importance to Indian society. In fact, the monsoon is a period of great suspense. Particularly during the months of June and July the villagers throughout the country wait anxiously before the shrines of their rain gods for the promise of a fruitful harvest. If the rains are timely and of sufficient amount, the harvest is reasonably assured and famine averted; if the monsoon is inadequate in any way, famine becomes the haunting fear and often a cruel reality to millions of villagers. However, the dangers of famine have been lessened, because the extension of railways in recent years has made it possible to send food supplies to stricken areas. Without the aid of irrigation, a good crop is expected in many parts of India only once in five years. It is said that during a prolonged drought in the monsoon season, the vil-

<sup>1</sup>Matumdar, Narendranath, *A History of Education in Ancient India*, pp. 2, 3, Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1914. Italicized words ours.

<sup>2</sup>Huntington, Ellsworth, *Civilization and Climate*, p. 35, Yale University Press, 1913.

lagers, in parts of the country, will pray fervently before their gods represented by various sorts of clay, wood, or stone images; and if the rain is deferred beyond a given point of time, or zero hour, the images are then broken in frenzy and new ones made,—in other words, upon the gods is administered a humiliating discipline by their devotees. In this connection we may recall that in America it is not uncommon for rural people to pray for rain during a prolonged and destructive drought.

But sometimes the rain god retaliates by sending so much rain that destruction follows on the wings of the flood. The rivers which during the dry season were hidden beneath the earth and whose beds were mere streaks of dry sand, as a result of the "anger of the rain gods," suddenly become raging torrents, spreading over vast areas. In early November when travelling in Madras Presidency, just at the belated close of the monsoon period in that area, I noted that the rivers were yet out of their banks, fresh drift material was lodged in the tree-tops, section hands on the railroad were busy repairing wash-outs, and water buffaloes and cattle were swimming from pasture to pasture. Often during the rainy season the mud walls of the villagers' huts become so softened as to spring apart or crumble, and the mud floors of these huts often become a quagmire. Thus the idyllic mud villages of the dry season, that were the scenes of twilight repose and the *guyan sabbha*, become places of illness and misery. Many villages in the lowlands have to keep boats for the wet season, and all have to keep on the lookout for numberless snakes and scorpions that are driven from their hiding places in the earth by the rising floods. A snake was killed in our bedroom in South India one night in late November after two days of heavy rain.

The monsoon, while uncertain as to its adequacy in many parts of India, is a natural phenomenon that can be turned to good account by an intelligent and adaptable people. Like the law of gravity, it cannot be repealed by man, nor can it be ignored with safety; but man, knowing something of its ways of behavior, may do something toward circumventing its destructive tendencies and putting it to good use. However, this calls for certain qualities in the people that India sorely lacks today. For example, in order to escape the discomforts that result in the rainy season from the poor location and the poor construction of the mud huts in many parts of India, villages often need to be relocated upon higher land, and the huts need to have the tops of the walls covered with tile coping, the roofs made of better material, and the floors both raised and covered with wood or other water-resistant substance. But wood in India is extremely expensive, and the reloca-



tion of villages often means getting possession of new land, and also forsaking the familiar scenes of the ancestral villages. These difficulties have often proved to be insurmountable to the spiritless and tradition-ridden villagers.

Cooperation along voluntary, democratic lines not heretofore included in the caste pattern, is very much needed in India. For example, the storing of the destructive surplus water of the monsoon period for later use during the scorching dry season calls for the construction of reservoirs and irrigation ditches, and this in turn calls for capital and cooperation. The Mormons when they settled Utah demonstrated to the world what intelligent cooperation could do to make the desert blossom like the rose. But India, unassisted by western capital and leadership, has never fully learned this lesson, even though the British Government has taken the lead in the construction of vast irrigation projects. Even when such projects have once been inaugurated, they have not always proved to be an unmixed blessing. In the Punjab, where the Government has developed irrigation on an extensive scale, the natives soon fell into costly legal disputes over water-rights, boundaries etc., so that in the year 1926, according to Darling, 40 per cent of the adult males of that region were in court either as litigants or as witnesses. The spirit of non-cooperation is also frequently shown by the disinclination of the villagers to keep the village wells in repair. I have visited many villages where the wells were out of use because no one would repair them, while the villagers were carrying or hauling insipid water from water holes miles away. It is said that the tanks and wells under the earlier Indian system were kept up by the land-owners (*zamindars*), but these are now largely absentee owners.

Intelligence and cooperation could relieve India of many of her troubles caused by geographical and climatic factors, but it is a question how soon, if ever, she will rise to the occasion. Government agricultural colleges and departments, mission schools of agriculture, and private agencies are clearly demonstrating how irrigation can be done, and its beneficial results to farming; but as yet, the average village farmer is either uninformed or indifferent. I have seen napier grass at the Allahabad Agricultural Institute producing, under irrigation, 80 to 85 tons per acre; and this grass put down in pit silos becomes an effective insurance against vast losses through starvation of livestock usually taking place during the dry season. But the growth of napier grass, guinea grass, alfalfa, or any other high-yielding forage under irrigation, and the use of the inexpensive and simple pit silos—mere holes in the ground—call for the remaking of a number of folkways that cluster

about the semi-pastoral type of farming practiced in most of India for hundreds of years. The average Indian farmer seems to be oblivious to the economic loss he sustains through keeping diseased and otherwise worthless and starved livestock, and he does not seem to see any valid reason for improving his animals or methods of farming, even though these improvements and their resulting benefits have been demonstrated to him. Some Hindu philosophers are likely to ascribe these characteristics of the Indian farmer to a spirituality that does not place a great deal of store upon material things; and if given a little encouragement, may wax eloquent in showing how this spirituality, even if exercised in a dung-heap sort of civilization characterized by ignorance, disease, and famine, is superior to the crass materialism of western countries. Such paradoxes are hard to straighten out; for even if the average villager is spiritual, it is not the sort of spirituality that causes him, outside the traditional practices and patterns of the caste system, to cooperate with his fellow citizens toward doing many things for their mutual benefit, or toward living in cleanliness and above the hunger level in his own home. Which of these conditions may rightly be charged, ultimately, to India's geographical factors, is somewhat a matter of speculation, but the traveller from the West can easily see some indications of the integration of geographical and cultural factors in modern Indian society.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Indian People*

**Racial and Cultural Elements.** The population of India, as we shall show more fully later, has certain characteristics that challenge the student of society. Its fecundity in the face of serious odds of disease, ignorance, and famine, is one of its outstanding characteristics. Since 1901 the population has increased about fifty-three millions, or 18.6 per cent in thirty years. However, as compared with the population increase of the United States for the same period, this rate of increase is relatively moderate, for during this period in the latter country the increase was 61.6 per cent. Today the population of India, excluding Burma, is estimated at 336,798,000 (1931 Census). The significance of numbers as to certain biological and economic considerations will be dealt with more fully later.

But the ethnic and cultural aspects of the population are probably the more interesting phases which we should now briefly describe. One who travels extensively throughout India is soon

<sup>4</sup>See Huntington, Ellsworth. *Civilization and Climate*, Chs. 3 and 4. Yale University Press, 1916.



impressed by the fact that the people do not seem to be of a single homogeneous stock. These observations, fortified by references to the works of ethnologists, bring one to the conclusion that India is made up of a racially conglomerate people, differing widely in ethnic origins, cultures, religions, and social status. The remainder of this book is largely devoted to the people of India viewed from these different standpoints.

Students of Indian ethnology pretty generally assume that in remote antiquity the country was occupied by a negroid people of primitive culture probably ethnically related to the aboriginal tribes of Ceylon, Sumatra, and possibly Australia. One of the best examples of these aboriginal peoples is the Andamanese, considered by some as being a pure race. Many tribes of this nature, such as the Bhils, the Kadiris, and the Irulas occur throughout India. These tribes, historically, have usually withdrawn unto themselves, have had but little to do with outsiders, and have retained the same old tribal customs, gods, and social outlook that have been theirs for many, many centuries.

The writer visited a tribe of the Bhils in western India and found them to be hospitable and well disposed, though apparently very backward and socially retarded. The typical Bhil is small, dark, broad-nosed, well-knit, and active. It is the general custom for both men and women to wear their hair long. In religion, like most of the aboriginal tribes, they are animists, though to some extent Hinduism has made its impact upon them. In times of famine it is said that the Bhil will eat beef, but not snakes, rats, monkeys, or the horse. His chief god is Vaghdeo, the tiger, and he propitiates ghosts, and makes oaths on the moon or the dog.\*

Still in later prehistoric times, it is held by some scholars that there was an inflow of peoples called the Dravidians through Baluchistan from western Asia; and likewise from the northeast there occurred an infiltration of Mongoloid races. There followed Indo-Aryan waves and Moslem invasions, and a number of minor immigrations such as the Parsees in the eighth century A.D., and small numbers of Europeans since about the fifteenth century.

Some of the military invasions of India were of note, and the traveller may have these matters recalled by historical relics or monuments that may be pointed out by one's guide. In 327 B.C. Alexander the Great invaded India and left garrisons in Western India. It is said a Greek influence upon Indian art followed. A Hun invasion occurred in 470 A.D., and Tamerlane, a Mogul warrior, invaded India and sacked Delhi in 1398. What is known as the Mogul Dynasty was established by Babur the King of Kabul

\*Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, pp. 494-495.



in 1525. Akbar the Great, and one of the most famous of the Mogul emperors, began his reign in 1556. He vastly extended his sway throughout India by the use of arms, but he was also a great organizer who sought to benefit his people irrespective of religion or condition. His grandson, Shah Jahan, came to the throne in 1627 and his reign was called the Golden Age of Indian Architecture. Such great pieces of architecture as the Taj Mahal at Agra stand as eloquent evidence of his contribution to art. Other historical episodes of a more recent date, chiefly connected with British history and including such illustrious names as Clive, Hastings, Minto, Balfour, and Irwin, are known to students of English history, so need not be reviewed here.

Though there is a lack of agreement among scholars on some points as to the exact origin and racial composition of the population of present-day India, eight racial types, to use the nomenclature given by Risley, are listed by competent authority. These are:

1. The aboriginal or pre-Dravidian tribes found mostly in the hill and jungle sections of central and western India.
2. The Dravidians extending over the southern peninsula up to the Ganges River.
3. The Indo-Aryans, mostly in western and northwestern India.
4. The Ayro-Dravidians or Hindustani, found in the Ganges Valley.
5. The Scytho-Dravidians, found east of the Indus River, in the Gujarat and parts of Bombay.
6. The Turko-Iranians, found west of the Indus in the North-West Frontier Province.
7. The Mongoloid type found in Burma, Assam, and the eastern foothills of the Himalayas.
8. The Mongolo-Dravidians, in 'Bengal.'

The ethnologist, no doubt, will note many fusions among certain of these racial stocks, though in certain sections and in limited areas, these stocks may yet be found of almost pure type. Archaeological researches now under way in different parts of India may ultimately throw much needed light upon certain moot questions as to the origin and sequence of the various social elements of the population.

**The Caste System.** The student of society who traces impor-

---

\*Encyclopædia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, p. 157.

tant historical invasions and the overcoming of a weak or non-military people by strong military conquerors, may readily surmise how the extreme hereditary social stratification of India probably had its origin. Differences in religion between the successive waves of invaders and the conquered, differences between conquerors and the conquered in political experience and military power, a feudal system in varying degrees of tenacity, and differences in culture and wealth between the various racial and political groups,—sometimes irreconcilable even to the present day, yet sometimes almost fading out entirely,—are the remote origins of the rigid social stratification found in India today. This is usually referred to as the *caste system* and will be discussed more fully in its economic, religious, and cultural aspects in subsequent chapters. The relative immobility of the population as to residence, the warm climate, and age-old custom and ignorance, all combine to conserve this social stratification.

This diversity in the racial origins and cultural composition of the people has given rise to an equally great diversity in languages, as well. It is estimated that there are a dozen or more major languages, and probably as many as 175 distinct languages and 540 dialects extant in India today. The social and political effects of this situation can hardly be assessed. One may well surmise that under these conditions it would be difficult to attain a very pronounced solidarity in government and social institutions; that newspapers would have a very limited circulation; and that illiteracy would result. These results are obvious. It is estimated that not more than two per cent of the women and ten per cent of the men are literate in any language, so that the masses are ignorant, inarticulate, gullible and superstitious. And because of the great diversity of languages throughout the empire, the central Congress at Delhi is conducted mostly in English, a foreign language; and trade and social intercourse are generally handicapped. The reader could imagine what a similar diversity of language in his own country would mean, if because of language handicaps he could not converse with the people in an adjoining county or state; and more especially if these people had a different system of money, weights, and measures, as is true in parts of India today. An attempt is being made to make Hindustani the *lingua franca* of the country, but the movement has not gone far. At the present time educated men and women from different sections almost universally converse in English.



## *Chapter II*

### TRAVELLING IN INDIA

The reader who has clearly in mind the great size of India, its semi-desert areas, its wide plains, its rivers which often fade away during the dry season and become raging torrents and inland lakes during the wet season, the excessive heat of the summer, and other geographical and climatic factors typical of this country, can easily visualize the discomforts and the pleasures of travel here. But the reader's interest in Indian travel will become greatly sharpened when he recalls the manners and customs of the people as they, throughout the centuries of Indian civilization, have attempted to adjust themselves to the physical handicaps to travel. After all, it is the human factor that gives meaning to the physical conditions and the quality of civilization of a country, especially when one focuses his considerations on such an interesting topic as travel.

Because of the great size of the country geographically, the poverty of the masses, the variety in languages and customs, and the ignorance of distant places, the people of India, until fairly recently, have not travelled much. In former days, and even today, many of the educated classes have not visited important sections of their own country; and, of course, a vast number of the village masses have never gone far from their ancestral home localities. A few of the bolder men may have gone as far as an open-air shandy or *meta* in a village a few miles distant; and a chance man may have gone on a pilgrimage to Conjeeveram or Benares, or may have found employment in a neighboring city for a time, and brought back to his ancestral village more or less fabulous stories of what he saw and experienced. On occasion, pestilence or famine may have driven the people from their villages, even into distant places; but after allowances are made for these exceptions, India, viewed in the large, is filled with a stationary, immobile population. However, owing to the inauguration of the cheap third-rate fare by



the railways, there has grown, in recent years, a marked disposition of the masses to travel about, at least for fairly short distances. During the year 1929-30, 634,000,000 passengers were carried on Indian railways, a number that is almost twice the entire population. Slightly over 95 per cent of these were third-class travellers.<sup>1</sup>

With the further extension and the lowering of the cost of transportation, travel may become an extensive practice on the part of the village population and thereby ultimately become a mighty factor in the education of the people, the development of a common language and culture, the breaking down of the caste system, and the building up of a strong national spirit.

### *Means of Travel*

**The Railway.** The railway is the most important means of passenger travel between distant places within the country. With the exception of the Ganges, and possibly a few other rivers for a part of the year, river transportation in India is indeed small, especially as compared with many countries of the Orient, and particularly China, where river transportation is very important. But the systems of railways which connect all the large cities and important sections of the country, form a substantial basis of transportation. Thus India is well in advance of many backward countries, thanks to British initiative and influence, and thus the danger of pestilence and famine has become greatly lessened. India, in 1931, had slightly over 42,000 miles of railway, which is nearly double the mileage of the United Kingdom, and which, according to some estimates, places her third in rank in railway mileage to our own country (Fig. VIII).<sup>2</sup>

However, it is a realistic picture of the railroad and its equipment as a means of travel that interests us most in this part of our story. The road-beds often are not substantial and free of short curves, as in America, though some of the main-line roadways are perhaps as good as any in the world. The coaches are very light, so that when the train is going fast, they frequently rock and jerk about violently. The coaches, for the most part, are small, cheap, box-like structures, with a row of benches around the four walls leaving only passage space to the doors; or, on occasion, a row of benches may extend down the center of the coach. The coaches usually have but one compartment for all the travellers who enter and travel together; but on some of the better roads

<sup>1</sup>India in 1930-31, p. 234, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1932.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

"coupés," or two-person compartments, may be had by previous reservation. The third-class compartments are the most cheaply furnished, the furniture usually consisting of bare wooden benches, an electric light, and an ill-kept toilet. The furnishing of the compartments improves somewhat as the scale advances through intermediate, second and first class. Some second-class compartments have cushions on the seats and electric fans; but regardless of the class, one must furnish his own bedding, and to a large extent serve as his own conductor. In a tour to almost every part of the country, I did not see a single case of bedding furnished by the railway, as is done by the Pullman Company for the railways in America; and only on rare occasions after the gate-man punched my ticket did I see a train official until I handed in my ticket to the gate-man at the other end of the line. This adds greatly to one's problems of travel. However, if one is well-equipped with a travelling outfit and travels first-class, he may find the journey quite comfortable, much more private, and less expensive than on American trains. In looking over our travel notes we find that our second-class train fare from Bombay to Nagpur, a distance of 520 miles, was twenty-four rupees and six annas, or about one and a half cents per mile. The third-class fare is between a third and a half cent per mile.

**The Bullock Cart.** The bullock or ox cart is by far the most common means of transportation for short-distance hauls in and about railway centers, and is about the only means of travel among the inland villages, whether the distance be long or short. In central and north India, however, camel caravans are used to some extent in transporting cotton and other products; also to a limited extent elephants are used in logging, the forestry service, temple service, and on state occasions by royalty. But taking India as a whole, the bullock is by far the most important animal in furnishing power for carrying on agriculture and the transportation of freight and passengers. In recent years, automobiles, in limited numbers, have found their way into the cities, and the autobus is beginning to be used commercially in the transportation of both people and goods. The initial high cost of automobiles, the high cost of gasoline and repairs, and the lack of good roads and bridges, will hinder, at least temporarily, a rapid development of this means of transportation. But good roads are rapidly making their way in many parts of the country, and we may look forward to their extension in the future. Except for cavalry and sporting purposes, horses are not extensively used in India. About the cities a few small ponies may be seen drawing passenger "jutkas", or





FIG. III. METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION. 1. Heavy freight cart, Benares;  
2. The passenger IDUGA or JUTKA, Madras; 3. A camel caravan returning  
to the interior for a load of cotton, Nagpur; 4. A DAKKI, or pole chair,  
Darjeeling. Also see Figs. II and VIII.





"tongas", but even these are comparatively few in number, so that after spending several months in India, horses of all kinds were seen so rarely as almost to become a curiosity. This was particularly true of inland villages.

The bullock carts of India, made by the village cartmakers, vary considerably in appearance with the section of the country and the use to be made of them. In practically all cases, regardless of the section of the country, the carts are usually two-wheeled, the wheels, frequently, having iron tires. Often the axles are only wooden, or wooden with a strip of iron underneath. Sometimes the axle consists of an iron rod to which the wooden framework of the cart is bolted. The framework of the cart is either extended forward to the bullocks' yoke, or is fastened to a solid piece of wood, the far end of which is fastened to the yoke. It requires experience and judgment so to adjust a heavy load of logs, rice, or passengers as not to throw too much weight upon the bullocks' necks. The driver usually squats on the cart tongue so as to be near to pinch the bullocks' tails, and thereby misses many of the hard jolts that those occupying the springless cart proper may get when going over rough roads.

**The Tonga.** The *tonga*, *reckla*, or *jutha*, as it is called in different sections, is a light two-wheeled passenger cart which is usually covered very much as our pioneer prairie schooners were covered (Fig. III). In the cities these are sometimes drawn by small ponies; but most of them, particularly in South India, are drawn by bullocks. Certain breeds of these bullocks, when forced to do so, can maintain a speed of six or eight miles an hour for a considerable period of time. Sometimes one bullock may be hitched to the tonga, but usually two are yoked to it. In the villages there are usually no seats in this vehicle. The driver squats in the front to serve the two-fold function of "chauffeur" and "conductor," while the passengers sit on the floor, sometimes crowded in very much like a number of small boys in a hollow log. In the cities the tongas usually have seats, often so arranged that the passengers ride backward; and sometimes these vehicles have cushioned seats, oil lamps, and other extensive ornamentation that give them an up-to-date appearance. While waiting for passengers, the drivers often feed their animals by handing out to them wisps of hay; but the feeding process is quickly ended if a customer can be inveigled into beginning a journey. The passenger alighting from a train in a city or larger village is likely to be harassed greatly by the *tonga-wallas* (drivers) who have scouts out drumming up trade and who at times almost compel him to "accept" service. In the larger cities

where automobile taxi service is replacing the tonga, the same harassing of the traveller, and the same haggling over prices at the end of a journey occur. The way to avoid haggling is to fix the price at the beginning of the trip, although this is not always easy to do, especially if the traveller is not quite sure of the distance to his destination.

**The Autobus.** With the introduction of automobiles, and a mere beginning toward making hard roads and the bridging of streams, motor bus lines are making their appearance. However excellent these vehicles may have been originally, they soon become dilapidated and tiresome to passengers used to western modes of travel. While in some respects the Indians are artists, being able to do the finest carving, embroidery, and print-making imaginable, they seem to be almost minus the mechanical ability that is required to keep a motor car in decent running order. The groaning, knocking, and creaking of a ramshackle car just able to creep along, and the dust and filth incident to travel in a country like India, do not seem to cause the least concern to the average chauffeur. He seems to consider these as standard accompaniments of travel, and nonchalantly proceeds on the journey. Sometimes, in crossing a stream, a bus or private automobile may become mired in the sand, but there are usually a number of half-clad coolies lingering idly about for just such occasions, and if given their price, will push the car out.

In travelling by public motor busses, experience shows that one must not bank too much on arriving at his destination on a given time. If one must be at a place at a specific time, and travel by public motor bus is contemplated, he should ordinarily set out well in advance of the normal time of departure in western countries. While there are schedules by which the busses are supposed to run, these schedules are only general indicators of the number of busses a day that run between two points. Rarely are busses on time, and more rarely are they ahead of time. It is their rule to wait for a sufficient number of passengers to justify a trip, and sometimes this may require two or three hours. To illustrate, when stopping at a place in north India, some thirty miles from a railway station that I wished to reach in the early afternoon, I found that it was advisable to book passage on the early morning bus. This was done by having our host send word to the bus station for the morning bus to call at his house on its way. We had breakfast at the usual time, but before going to the table, on looking at my watch, I noted that the bus was already overdue. I was about to get excited, but my host calmed my fears with the assurance that we had plenty of time, and that time to the average Indian



bus driver or Indian passenger was of little consideration. This I found to be true, for after completing breakfast, and preparing our luggage for the journey, we found the bus had just arrived; and before we could take our leave, the passengers had gotten out and had gone into our host's house and started up his victrola! No one, chauffeur or passengers, seemed the least worried by our slowness; and after piling our luggage on the top of the bus with a motley mass of old suitcases, small tin trunks, and bundles tied up in cloth, we were deposited on the front seat with the driver to begin a strange and interesting journey. The seat just back of ours was curtained off and reserved for women only, to take care of the "purdah" women, or those women yet observing the rule of seclusion. Back of this seat were others filled with passengers and bundles, so that we had a load that really endangered the carrying capacity of our dilapidated old bus. Going through numerous villages where passengers were discharged and others taken on, accompanied by the usual periods of waiting and the readjustment of baggage and passengers, we finally reached our destination. I suppose that Mrs. Hypes and I were the only passengers on the trip that really worried about not reaching their destination on time; but in reflecting upon this experience, I have come to think that our disposition to worry under such circumstances could not be counted a virtue. In fact, when looking back upon this experience, I am glad it was leisurely and long drawn-out, for it gave us time to observe the village markets, shrines, livestock, houses and people in a way that would have been impossible had we travelled in a more rapid and businesslike fashion.

**Other Means of Travel.** There are other means of travel in India but, taking the country as a whole, we have already mentioned the more important ones. There is a certain amount of rickshaw passenger transportation, chiefly in the larger cities; and as in other countries of the Orient, the stranger from the West is soon noted by these people and his life made miserable. These fellows often will run ahead of one another along the street, trying to push their competitors out of line so as to seize the passerby. Sometimes these men will run in front of travellers so as to hinder their passing on the street. A group of our friends in a Chinese city recently were practically swamped by a number of rickshaw men competing with one another for passengers, resulting in a fight among the rickshaw men and the injury of some of the reluctant passengers. In order to get them out of the snarling, fighting group of rickshaw men, the police were called in. The *dandy*, or sort of chair carried on two poles by two or more coolies, is some-

times used, particularly among the hill stations. Up among the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains, *dandy-wallas* (coolies) were seen frequently, and sometimes became almost as great a nuisance to a tourist out for a little fresh air as the rickshaw men. Sometimes at some of the fords, or at some of the temples where there are streams of water across which sightseers are permitted to go, a number of coolies are assembled to offer transportation on their shoulders. While accompanying a group of friends visiting a temple in south India, I recall, after seeing a number of pilgrims marching barefoot across an artificial pool from one shrine to another, a number of half-naked coolies, loitering about, who offered to carry us across on their shoulders. One of the young men of our group accepted, but the women declined, to the evident disappointment of the coolies.

### *Tippling and Other Problems of Travel*

**Portering.** One who has travelled a great deal at home and abroad knows something about the transportation of baggage and the cost thereof. Hardly anywhere is the traveller who has a small bag that he himself wishes to carry, thanked for his industry by the "willing workers" in the portering business. Portering in India has most of the bad features of portering elsewhere, and, to make it worse, is here a near relative to begging. Since India does not receive a very great number of summer tourists, and has a vast number of unemployed, portering there is greatly over-manned.

Western travellers in India usually have considerable baggage, which places them at the mercy of the horde of baggage coolies that lounge about most railway stations. The trains and the rest houses seldom furnish beds, towels, or soap, and many of the station hotels do not. Thus the traveller needs to provide himself a bed-roll, which should include a mosquito net. He should also carry a canteen filled with boiled water, and should have some hard-tack or lunch prepared at dependable sources, or else eat only boiled food protected from flies, if such can be found in the restaurants on the way. Besides these *impedimenta* of travel, he is apt to have a trunk or two, besides a few suitcases and grips. All this baggage must be transported by the station coolies. A group of these, seeing one's tonga or taxi approach the station, is likely to swoop down upon him e'er his conveyance can come to a halt, and before he knows what has happened, his baggage is unloaded and carried off before other coolie competitors can come along. Often twice as many employ themselves as are needed, and of course never forget to present themselves for the *anna* or two tip.



I remember on one occasion when coming down to Bombay from a point in western India, travelling lightly with only a bed-roll, a suitcase, a canteen and a brief case, which would make a moderate load for only one coolie, I had to make a short transfer at an intermediate station. A coolie easily going along with this load, had the brief case snatched out of his hand by another coolie who jauntily perched it upon his shoulder as if it weighed sixty pounds, and trudged into the train after us. After my baggage was put in place, I handed the coolie I had originally employed a 4-anna coin, or about 8 cents in our money. This was a very generous tip, since it is about as much as a farm coolie receives for a day's work. The coolie who had snatched the brief case received no tip, and I must say this fellow had a very disgusted and disappointed look on his face. As the train pulled out of the station, he kept expostulating, running along the track just under my window.

Many travellers in India employ a servant. While servants are not absolutely necessary, a good servant is well worth his expense, for he can act as interpreter, valet, guard of one's belongings while one is away at meals, make beds, and often serve as waiter if one is stopping at a rest house or private home. It is said that wages for servants average about 45 rupees per month (about \$15), plus 8 annas a day for food and about 15 rupees for the period of employment for clothing. A servant usually travels third class, which is about one-sixth the fare for a first-class ticket. Thus, varying with the mileage of one's travel, a servant's cost ranges from 75 to 100 rupees per month or more. Since the railway time-tables are published in English and the names of stations are usually printed in both English and the language of the local area, I found no difficulty in travelling without a servant to act as interpreter. If one gets to the station for a given train, after the purchase of his ticket, the mere announcement to his coolie baggage bearers of the place he wishes to go, causes them to go to the proper place to find his train. However, in most of the places of central and southern India the coolie porters know a little English, which sometimes is of assistance to the traveller. The spirit of friendship existing between a traveller and his servant often becomes intimate. I remember the fine collection of flowers bestowed upon us by our servant when we were sailing from Calcutta, and his waving sash was the last thing we saw as our vessel disappeared down the river.

### *The Romance of Indian Travel*

The traveller who has to keep up for several months a strenuous schedule of going from place to place in India, particularly



if it is during the summer season, is likely to become so absorbed with the exigencies of his activities as to overlook the things of great interest met by him on the way from day to day. Most of those who have travelled extensively in India will advise one unused to Indian travel to "go in second gear", take a day or two off per week for absolute rest, and to take a nap in the afternoon each day. The average American finds almost any sort of advice hard to take, and whether travelling for business or pleasure, is apt to take India as a matter of fact and proceed as if he were travelling in a temperate climate. Even if he wears a cork or pith *topee* (hat), dresses in palm beach clothes and avoids the sun as much as possible, a few weeks' continuous travel is apt to give him a tired feeling. But even then, he is likely to keep wide enough awake to notice many things which, after his return home, in times of reverie, will flit across memory's wall to remind him of interesting days spent in that ancient land of mysticism and tragedy.

**A Country of Repose.** While the westerner may rush about the country in maddened haste, native Indians, as a rule, pursue their journeys with leisure. What if an Indian should miss his train; can't he wait until the next day? That is just what he does, for the traveller passing at night through the railway stations in both cities and villages usually sees the open sheds and the station waiting rooms strewn with sleeping Indians covered only by the light cloths carried on their persons. And when a train stops at a station, it is usually for a long enough time to permit those who desire to alight and take a bath at a wayside fountain.

The herds and flocks, which are as much a part of every city and village as the thoroughfares themselves, make an impression of serenity upon the traveller. The cows, goats, sheep, and sometimes donkeys, are brought together of a morning on the outskirts of a village to be taken by herders to the outlying waste lands to pasture. These animals may linger for a time lazily under the spreading branches of the great banyan trees, or by the shrines of the village gods found on every hand; but eventually they are driven forth to fill the highways to overflowing. Bullock carts can wend their way through this melee of living creatures without much damage, but the motorist, especially if he be a westerner, will probably show great irritation on having his progress impeded. Sometimes a hump-backed cow or a clumsy water buffalo dares to change her mind and run in front of an oncoming car to the damage of both; but most motorists prefer to avoid such experiences. Often the herder may be seen lying idly under the shade of wayside trees while the herds and flocks spread out over the road-

way and fields; or, more alert, he may be seen watching the circling of an eagle or vulture, or on occasion the sly stalking of a jackal or a hyena. But all this is only a bit of regular routine ending with the sheltering of his animals at night in the corrals and the mud huts of their several owners. Day after day, and generation after generation, herders have carried on this semi-pastoral type of farming without change or excitement.

As in the methods of travel and herding, so in methods of farming, worshiping, feasting, and marketing. With but few exceptions, there is a sameness and a trueness to form that seems an antidote for worry and enervating excitement. True, during times of famine, flood, epidemic, or communal strife, the Indian villager may become greatly disturbed; but for ages past, these phenomena, like death, have ever been present with him, so that when the trouble lightens, he soon resumes the routine of daily life, looking forward stoically to the time when he can pass from this earthly existence into a higher incarnation, and thence eventually into the godhead Brahma. It is such serenity that permits a man to forsake his fortune and family in order to go forth into the world a beggar, or to spend his time, his energy and his health in making long, enervating pilgrimages to holy cities to gaze on the face of the image of his favorite gods. It is just such steadfast serenity, undergirded by the custom of centuries, that causes India to be a slow participant in the findings of modern science and a reluctant follower of the Christian missionary in the open and formal acceptance of a new religion.

**A Country of Creative Imagination.** The traveller who finds time to read books of Indian folk-stories, religion, and poetry, at once becomes impressed with the vividness and the richness of the Indian imagination. Legend, dating back into the twilight of the centuries, tells how the chipmunk came to get stripes on his back, how monkeys came to Ramtek, and how Ganesha came to have the head of an elephant and the body of a man. Likewise legend gives an anthropomorphic account of the birth and the marriage of the gods, and their conflicts with one another. Furthermore, legend explains the eclipses of the sun and the moon, the overflow of rivers, the droughts, the pestilences among both humans and animals, and the various other phenomena of life and death. This gives rise to the animism characteristic of all the indigenous religions of India, that peoples the heavens, the earth and the sea with invisible spirits, most of which are malevolent and have to be propitiated.

But finer and more inspiring than all this, Indian imagination



finds a creative outlet in art and poetry. One who has been privileged to gaze upon the wonders of the Taj Mahal or the numerous temples scattered throughout the land, can never forget the fine carving, the inlaying with ivory and precious stones, and the lines of symmetry and beauty that most of these contain. And if one should read Tagore's *Gitanjali*, or the poems of Tukaram, Appasammy, or others quoted in the chapter on the Music of India (Ch. XXIII), he is at once inspired by the music, the word artistry, and the aspiration of great poetic genius.

**The Journey's End.** An Indian journey, like all others, sooner or later comes to an end. The traveller, while making rapid excursions from place to place, may be so oppressed by the inconveniences of travel as to long for the end of his journey, but after the end has been reached and a period of rest enjoyed, he will probably experience a change of attitude. Much of India, it is true, particularly during the dry season, is drab and unattractive; on the other hand, much of it leaves a pleasant impression on memory's walls. As I write this account, the picture of the beautiful Malabar Hill in Bombay flits before my mind's eye; so does the stony mountain back of the Mission Agricultural Institute at Katpadi; the parks of Rangoon; the banyan lined highways in many parts of central and southern India; the snow-enshrouded heights of the majestic Himalayas beyond Darjeeling; the great Taj Mahal and many carved temples hoary with tradition and history. Besides these, many other daily experiences clamor for recognition: the shuffling of bare feet in the streets; half-clad dark-skinned men lounging about public buildings or congregated in the market-places; the towers of silence where the Parsees expose their dead to the vultures; the funeral pyres; the holy men; the learned philosophers or the common villagers discussing religion; the beggar; the mela (religious festival); the shandy (open-air market); the wandering village herds; the thumping of the dholak (drum) at night; the nocturnal whining howls of jackals; the chattering of monkeys; the tinkling bells of caravans of camels or bullocks; the wild peacocks soberly walking in the fields; the great herons standing silently in the ponds; and the cobra gliding stealthily on a night visit to one's yard or bedroom.—all these and many other sights and experiences refuse to be dismissed with their ending, and soon take on a mystical significance to one in a period of reverie.



## Chapter III

### AMONG THE CLOUDS OF DARJEELING

As intimated in the previous chapter, India has many places of great natural beauty. These are well distributed throughout that country as one who has travelled widely there can testify. The numerous hill stations to which many people resort during the hot season, as a rule, are places of rare beauty and repose; so also are many of the lakes and banyan-lined highways. But most travellers who have spent some time in India will say one has missed something of grandeur and sublimity if he has missed seeing either Kashmir or Darjeeling. Having spent the month of April, 1931 in Darjeeling, I personally experienced a view of nature in her most impressive and inspiring mood in India, so I wish to share this experience with my readers, though my description is entirely inadequate.

Darjeeling is a small city situated in a district of the same name in northern Bengal, near the borders of the provinces of Sikkim, Bhutan, and Nepal, which extend into the fastnesses of the Himalayan Mountains. Beyond to the north lies Tibet. The city occupies an elevation of between 7,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level, and is beautifully situated on a narrow ridge that juts into a vast basin in the heart of the Himalayas. But in spite of its enchanting geographical beauty and the quaint customs and appearances of its people, a sense of poverty and cultural degradation hovers over it. In fact, the apparently low cultural quality of most of the native inhabitants blemishes the grand picture which nature has so lavishly painted upon this portion of the map of Asia.

#### *Darjeeling a Place of Beauty*

The word *Darjeeling*, I am told, means the place of the mystic thunderbolt. It was also the name of an ancient Buddhist mon-

astery which once stood on Observatory Hill. But whatever the origin of the name, it is its situation among the mighty and awe-inspiring Himalayas that gives it its charm and significance. It was from this point of vantage and the winding journey to it as our diminutive train crossed chasms, followed ridges, and trundled through misty ravines, that I received my first real appreciative understanding of these mountains.

From Siliguri, the station at the foot of the mountains, the traveller enters Darjeeling by way of the Darjeeling and Himalayan Railway. This is a narrow-gauge railroad. The engine on this train is small and looks like a big beetle harnessed to a string of pill boxes. The carriages are small, narrow, and low, and are carried on wheels only 29½ inches in diameter. Some of the gradients are very steep—so steep that they are overcome by a system of forward and backward switching, and by hairpin loops that often make the engine of even a short train appear as though it were trying to catch up with the rear coach. However, unless the train runs into a heavy hail storm, its powerful little engine can haul successfully fifty tons or more up the steepest incline.

This was a far different picture of the Himalayas and their snow-clad peaks than I received as a school boy when I studied the geography of Asia. Then the Himalayan Mountains, with their academic and somewhat mythical Mt. Everest, were little more than mere smudgy spots on the map of Asia. Now, as I viewed from my window Kinchinjunga, a snow-clad double-peak of mountains forty-five miles away and over 28,000 feet above sea-level, my mental picture of the Himalayas, the roof of the world, became more realistic; and as I stood on Tiger Hill at day-break one morning in an effort to view the majestic Mt. Everest, more than one hundred miles to the northwest, realizing that there among the mists of the dawn it was rearing its lofty crest to the height of slightly more than 29,000 feet above sea-level, I was brought to a realization of why the rustic natives of the place maintain a worshipful attitude toward this mountain (Figs. II and IV).

Darjeeling, the town, because of its deep valleys and high mountains, has a varied climate, although it is only 379 miles north of Calcutta, which is in the tropical Ganges Valley. Some of the mountain spurs of this immediate area attain the height of 12,000 feet, and some of the narrow valleys sink to the level of 300 feet above the sea. This accounts for the great variety in the temperature of the region. Thus for most of the time a fire at night, in the open grate, is very acceptable in Darjeeling on the heights, particularly during the winter; while down in some of the deep val-



leys below, semi-tropical plants are growing in luxuriant abundance.

Someone has described this region as a confused labyrinth of ridges, deep valleys and dense forests with masses of trees festooned with moss and generally dripping with moisture from the humid atmosphere. That is certainly not overstating it, for I have seen all these, and moreover have seen the snowy peaks playing hide and seek among the billowy clouds that, on occasion, rise to hide their view. Sometimes, for days after a hail storm or during the rainy season, mists completely enshroud these majestic peaks of glistening snow. During the month of April, at the time of our visit here, however, one could view every day the grand spectacle of these peaks being clothed alternately by fluffy clouds, and later exposed to the sun's brilliant rays. As I looked from my window some of the higher snowy peaks of the distant mountains shone in the sun like jewels, while other peaks were slowly, but defiantly, being swallowed up by the gray mists. I wish that I could have taken a moving picture of this spectacle to show my friends in America! Mere words, or even photographs, are wholly inadequate to describe what I saw daily from my window; and even a moving picture would do scant justice to this great drama which nature is constantly performing upon one of her grandest stages.

Thus after having spent several weeks upon the lowlands and the plains of southern and central India, we found the scenery of this great Himalayan area a restoration of the soul that repaid us for our temporary exile from our native shores. And thus the reader can probably see why it was that the Himalayas stirred our imagination with inspiration. It was in such a frame of mind that Captain Lawrence, in his description of the beauties of Kashmir in his book, *The India We Served*, declared that the atmosphere there was not merely composed of nitrogen, oxygen, and other gases, but these mixed with laughter, sunshine, and the scent of flowers. Likewise, J. Campbell Forrester, in writing of the Himalayas, agrees that, "When God gave men tongues, He never dreamed that they would talk about the Himalayas, so there are no words with which to describe them adequately." But it is probably their *variety* more than any other thing, that constitutes the charm of the Himalayas. For instance, soon after our arrival in Darjeeling, the heaviest hail storm that I have ever experienced came down upon us. In a few minutes hailstones filled our backyard to the depth of several inches; and the roof gutters became so clogged with the hail that water poured through upon us. We found a number of pans, tin boxes, and the like, which we placed about in the room to catch the water. At other times, we could look down



upon a tea plantation in a valley or on a slope, and see that small area being drenched with rain, while about us there was fair weather. At the same time, the sun might be making a big sparkling diamond of one snow-capped mountain peak above us, while another peak might be enshrouded by a climbing bank of ashy clouds!

### *The People of Darjeeling*

One would think that with such a stimulating environment, the natives would all think lofty thoughts and create a great civilization. According to western standards, however, this great geographical area has ignominiously failed to produce a great social culture, though we might remember that it was among the foothills to the south that Buddha was born, and that Buddhist saints have often retired to the majestic highlands of this region for contemplation and self-discipline. But the social culture among the natives here seems low indeed. Evidently it takes more than a varied topography and a stimulating climate to make a man intelligent or a civilization great. Thus we shall turn aside temporarily from considering Darjeeling's geography to a consideration of her people, their customs, and their occupations; for into the midst of this wonderful scene which we have so inadequately described, man has persistently insinuated himself. But for our present purposes, we need not attempt to trace the origin and the development of the people of Darjeeling, because the ethnologists and the historians have done this already. I merely wish to write about those things that instantly strike the visitor's attention.

We shall now consider the people of Darjeeling in respect to their principal occupation, tea-growing, and as to their racial composition.

**Tea-Growing.** In the lowlands and valleys around Darjeeling are vast tea plantations, green and beautiful. The tea is a shrub, which, if not cut back, may attain the height of twelve or fifteen feet; but, pruned back so as to be productive, is left at a height of 2½ to 3½ feet or more. At a distance, the rows of a well-kept tea garden look very much like the well-trimmed low hedges around our lawns. On the steep slopes, sometimes reaching to the top of the lower ridges and peaks, the plantations extend in a system of terraces. This makes the hillsides, at a distance, appear like a system of stairways built for giants to climb and descend.

Tea-growing is not so simple as one might imagine. We have stated that the plants stand in close formation in orderly rows and



FIG. V. PUBLIC BUILDINGS. 1, *The High Court, Bombay*; 2, *The Secretariats of the Government of India, New Delhi.*





are clipped so as to appear like hedge fences; but it is the new tender shoots that grow above the clipped tops that are plucked. The old leaves on the shrubs are not used for tea. The tender shoots are carried to the tea factory where they are allowed to wilt, and are then run through a mill to bruise the leaves so as to make the aromatic substance within come to the surface. The leaves are then permitted to ferment to a desirable degree, at which time they are placed in a kiln to dry. After being sufficiently dried, the material is sorted and boxed for the market. Since tea is picked ten or twelve times a year, the process of tea-making is a year-round job.

I have been informed that nearly all these plantations are owned and operated by corporations, so that practically no small independent owner can be found here. The cultivation, picking, terracing, clipping, and other jobs connected with tea-growing in the Himalayan area, are performed by a rather large coolie population for whom the planters provide in a paternalistic way. Some of the houses here occupied by the resident officials appear pretentious; and I am informed that the coolies are usually better housed than similar laboring classes on the plains.

Tea-growing is practically the only business of extensive importance in this section. However, tourists come here in limited numbers for parts of the year, so there has grown up a system of portering and guiding that, at present, is entirely overmanned. If a traveller is not watchful, he may find a crowd of rickshaw "wallas" chasing after him with their pigtails flapping in the wind, impeding his progress or spoiling his enjoyment of a scene of natural beauty; or a group of bare-footed women leading ponies or donkeys, in some cases but little larger than their "conductors," may patter along behind him and in many "unknown" tongues and by many motions of the hand, implore him to take a ride. If you have a trunk weighing 200 pounds to transport, one of these coolie women will place the loop of her head-band around one corner of her load, and after getting it settled on her back, walk jauntily and patiently away with it up the steep slope to its ultimate destination. If you have only a light hand-bag to carry, one of the gallant coolies of the male persuasion may jump forward to grab it out of your hand, and if denied this privilege, may sulk away with an injured air.

**Racial Elements.** We may now describe the population of Darjeeling a little more at length. Since Darjeeling lies near the northeastern frontier of India, its population is polyglot, and withal, shows a marked strain of Mongolian blood; in fact many of the people could be easily mistaken for Chinese. According to Forrester, nineteen different dialects are spoken here; and the most



important castes (in this case, tribes, or even races) are the Lepchas, the Tibetans, and the Nepalese.

The Lepchas, according to Forrester, are the original inhabitants. Formerly they possessed all the hill country of Darjeeling and the neighboring sections, but were driven into the lower valleys about 250 years ago by the Tibetans. They have been for generations a conquered race and are considered a timid and peaceful people. They seem to dislike fixed employment and are happiest when in their native woods. Being placid and somewhat indolent, they are gradually being pushed out of the best lands by the more aggressive Nepalese. The permanent type of agriculture being developed in the tea industry, and the gradual reservation of forests, are hastening this process.

The Tibetans, as their name implies, originally came from Tibet. They are usually termed *Bhotians*, which in the vernacular means Tibetans. As a race, the Tibetans are considered by some to be turbulent and quarrelsome. The majority of them seem undersized, but tough and wiry as whipcord, and so full of energy that it is quite common to see very old people scampering nimbly about or carrying loads that seem far beyond their strength.

The Nepalese are the dominant race in Darjeeling. They are alert, cheerful, virile, and quick-tempered. Because they are good cultivators and hard workers, they possess most of the best agricultural land in the district.

**Comparisons with the People of the South.** When comparing the common people of the mountain country of the Himalayas with those of the plains, certain marked differences in culture patterns seem apparent. These may most easily be pointed out in the case of the women. It seems that especially the Tibetan and the Nepalese women wear more bulky jewelry than do the women of the plains. This is noticeable especially in the earrings, which, in some cases, are broad sheets of metal almost the size of small saucers and often studded with precious stones of large dimensions. They also have heavy necklaces often supporting a metallic box the size of one's hand; and heavy nose rings are common among them. Most of the women of this section carry their children on their backs, as the American Indian women carry theirs; but the women of the plains usually carry their children astride their hips. Here in Darjeeling the women do portering work, and carry most of the heavy baggage by means of head straps. I do not recall seeing many women in the plains carrying baggage or freight as regular coolie employment. However, at Nagpur, in central India, I saw scores of women carrying on their heads baskets of oranges to the train for shipment, and elsewhere in south India I have seen groups of women

in similar fashion, carrying in from the jungle baskets of wild custard apples. But the women on the plains do a great deal of heavy outdoor work. For example, it is common for a husband and his wife to be employed in road construction, the husband doing the digging and the wife carrying the earth away in a basket on her head. In a road gang near the capital city of Delhi, I saw women carrying earth in baskets on their heads, and breaking stone, while their babies were lying in the dust by the roadside or playing in the shade. Both women and men in Darjeeling wear more and heavier clothes than do the people of the plains, this being explained by the cooler climate of the mountain country. However, many adults in Darjeeling do not wear shoes, and I have seen scores of natives going along the street, barefoot, while the ground was covered with hail and snowy slush! They did not seem to mind the cold at all.

There seemed to be more Buddhists in this section than in any part of India yet visited by us; but it is estimated that at least three-fourths of the people here are Hindus. It is said, furthermore, that the Hinduism of this section, on the whole, is only a thin veneer of animism. Beneath this veneer can be seen the worship of ill-defined spiritual beings whose chief power is to cause evil to their votaries. The reader, perhaps, recalls newspaper accounts of how the natives of Darjeeling feared that the recent airship expedition over Mt. Everest might offend the spirits that are supposed to dwell among the fastnesses of this lofty peak. The terrible earthquake that later devastated parts of northern and central India, in the minds of these simple folk, was but just punishment meted out by the gods for allowing this expedition to defy their authority.

The Buddhism prevalent is said to be very similar to the Hinduism in that it is chiefly concerned with protection from malignant spirits. This protection is sought through charms, amulets, and tall prayer flags erected on housetops, bridges, passes, and other places believed to be infested by the evil denizens of the invisible world. On one of my walks I stooped to retrieve a prayer flag that had been blown down by the wind. This was one among a vast number strung on the same pole, placed there to have their power enhanced by waving in the wind.

Lamanism, an offshoot of Buddhism, and other non-Christian religions are also found here. Through the work of Christian missionaries there is said to be a considerable movement toward Christianity, particularly among the timid and peaceful Lepchas.

### *A Reverie*

In closing, I must confess that though the people of Darjee-



ling, their origin, customs, and occupations were such as to be of great interest to me, it was their geographical habitat that had the greater charm. Often after settling down again to the routine of a regular job, and recalling the varied scenes and experiences of a world tour, I have thought of the Himalayan Mountains, "the roof of the world," and with Forrester, exclaimed to myself:

"Knowest thou the land, where towering cedars rise  
In graceful majesty to the cloudless skies;  
Where keenest winds from icy summits blow  
Across the desert of eternal snow?  
Know'st thou it not, Oh there! Oh there!  
My wearied spirit let us flee from care."

---

<sup>1</sup>Forrester, J. Campbell, F.R.G.S., *The Sanctuary of the Himalayas*, p. 2. The Empire, Ltd., 1929.

**PART II**

**SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND FOLKWAYS**





## Chapter IV

### THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Indian civil government, under the influence of numerous factors and forces which are more fully discussed in subsequent chapters, is sure to challenge the interest of the students of Indian culture. Its externals, particularly in its local aspects, may seem rather informal and simple; but as the student pursues the subject into its philosophical and cultural phases, Indian government at once seems to become highly complex. We shall now make a brief presentation of a few of the more important aspects of Indian government and indicate the processes and structures by which it is maintained.

#### *The Rule of Custom*

**Diversity in Indian Law.** Numerous historical movements, and the yet more numerous traditional practices indigenous to the country, have tended to work toward a complex socio-civic order in India. This complexity is reflected in the multiplicity of codes, or layers of law existing concurrently in different sections, or even within the same section of the country, and applying somewhat specifically to certain social groupings, and not at all, or else in a modified form, to others. Each tribe, caste, and religious group has its own traditional practices, and these have been solidified through custom into law. This condition, originating in the diversity of cultures among the population, is allowed to continue because the people demand it and because it has been a policy of British rule to interfere as little as possible with the customs of the people and to hold aloof from partisan participation in religious or other communal differences that exist in the country.

As shown elsewhere in this chapter, the Independent States, within certain limits, maintain their own systems of civil laws, and even in some cases their own systems of weights, measures, and money. This works for a diversity that tends to retard movements



toward the political and socio-economic unity of the country as a whole. But even within British India there is much diversity in the system of civil law. For example, there is a body of laws made directly by the British Parliament, or by the Sovereign expressly for India. Then there is a body of English law in force, not passed expressly for India, but which holds, with more or less equal weight, in other dominions and dependencies. There is also a body of law made by persons or legislative and executive bodies having regulatory authority in India. These three types or divisions of laws are often known as Anglo-Indian law, and usually apply to the whole of British India, or with rare exceptions, to given areas.

Then, based upon the different major bodies of socio-religious custom and historical backgrounds, there are also for specific communities, Hindu law, Burmese-Buddhist law, and Mohammedan law. The Acts establishing courts of civil justice in the various provinces and presidencies provide that Hindu law, or Buddhist law (in Burma), or Mohammedan law, shall be applied to the adherents of these several faiths in such matters as succession, inheritance, marriage, divorce, dower, guardianship, minority, family relations, caste, and religious usage or institution. Even the Christian community in many places is permitted to maintain, alongside the previously existing social systems, its own practices with respect to marriage, moral observances, the keeping of vital statistics, etc. This complex situation is simplified somewhat in that, for many purposes, the Jains, Sikhs, and perhaps other minor religious communities, are regarded as Hindus.

This body of indigenous law, legalized and accepted in many cases by the acts above mentioned, is really nothing but the crystallization of the customs or common usage of the country. Even if not backed by formal legislative enactments, it usually has the weight of law, as in the case of the English Common Law, and is so recognized by the English courts in India. Thus it fits logically and amicably into the scheme for the government of this great and socially complex community of oriental peoples. However, since these various religious communities are scattered more or less heterogeneously throughout the country and have social and economic relations with one another, and since much of the common law which rules these several groups is highly local in its application and is open to dispute owing to differences in understanding, the interpretation of law and the meting out of even-handed justice between litigants often become very complex and difficult procedures. So one wonders at the civic serenity and decorum observed throughout the country, even in times of stress.



FIG. VI. TYPES OF SCHOOLS. 1, The St. Joseph's Mercantile School. 2, St. Joseph's Agricultural Institute. 3, Village primary school, Gostaba. All three schools are missionary enterprises.





**Hindu Law.** In order to give the reader a little more definite insight into the complexity of social custom as it serves for the rule and guidance of contemporary Indian society, we shall single out an example of Hindu law for special notice. Other sidelights are thrown on Hindu law, Mohammedan law, and Buddhist law elsewhere, especially in the chapters dealing with religions, art, and customs affecting economic life.

Much of the written sources of Hindu law is in the ancient Vedic and Sanskrit sacred literature. Having such an ancient and sacred source, Hindu law is, therefore, theoretically unalterable. Then there have appeared from time to time codifiers and commentators who have left to posterity a written collection of precepts and custom which apply in court procedures and are supposed to hold without variance. One of the most famous of these was the legendary Manu, a sort of Hindu Noah, who is supposed to have lived some time during the post-Vedic era,—possibly as late as 100 B.C., for that is the time suggested by some authorities as the date of the presentation of the Code to the Hindu world. According to myth, Manu was warned by a huge fish to build an ark in preparation for the coming flood. After the deluge a daughter was born to him, and thus he became the common ancestor of mankind. Manu's Code, which reflects Hindu thought and custom during the Buddhist period, establishes as its cornerstone the dictum that immemorial custom is transcendent law. It, therefore, clearly sets forth caste distinctions, caste relationships and duties, and prescribes penalties for breaking caste rules.<sup>1</sup>

The commentaries, as collected, are divided into two traditional schools of thought, the Mitakshara school and the Daya Bhaga school, and in parts of the country these are yet further subdivided into minor schools. These schools of legal thought differ widely upon such matters as inheritance, the theory of family property, etc.; and in some provinces one school of thought has precedence over the others, while the reverse is true elsewhere. This makes for confusion and for frequent appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and various High Courts for rulings and decisions. Such actions by these bodies, as a rule, are performed most judiciously and carefully, and when once rendered, usually have an effect similar to the rulings of higher courts in western countries.

<sup>1</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *The Hindu Jajmani System: A Socio-economic System Interrelating Members of a Hindu Village Community*, p. 11. This document was originally presented as a thesis at Cornell University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree, 1932. It was in manuscript form when the present book was written, but has since been published by the Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, U. P., India 1938. See also, Müller, Max (editor), *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIV, Oxford University Press, 1894.



In order to illustrate briefly the intricacy of Hindu law, and how the two major schools of legal thought divide upon a given question, let us examine the law governing the alienation of land. It seems probable that the question of the legal right for the purchase and sale of land by individuals or the joint-family was of relatively recent significance; and so probably was the right to manage land, in distinction to ownership with the right to alienate. When these questions arose, the Mitakshara school held that down to the great-grandson of a living ancestor, a male Hindu acquires by birth the right of ownership as a copartner in the ancestral family property. On the other hand, the Daya Bhaga school holds that the living ancestor is the sole owner with unfettered control and power to alienate, even for personal purposes, and that on his death his descendants in the direct male line who have no ascendants living, inherit the property in distinct and specified shares, and may either divide it or retain it as a joint holding. Under Mitakshara law no copartner's share is definite, even if he has no ascendants until a partition is called for. When such a copartner dies, even the common ancestor, his rights pass by survivorship and not by inheritances. But under the Daya Bhaga law, when a common ancestor dies, his heirs receive the property immediately. Thus if a family of brothers governed by Daya Bhaga law keep their property undivided, upon the death of one of them his share goes to his heirs, who in default of agnate (male) descendants, may be his widow, his daughters, or the sons of his daughters, which, in the last case, will pass to another family. But even then the property need not be separated by partition. On the other hand, in a similar case under Mitakshara law, if the deceased brother had any sons, they were already copartners in the family property, while his wife, his daughters, and his daughters' sons could not be copartners. Upon his death, in case he had no male heirs, there would thus be one copartner less in the family estate.

The inheritance and the alienation of property is made yet more complex because of other considerations. In some cases it is difficult to settle a joint-family estate because of the fact that the family may have non-inheriting members. Hindu law denies the right of inheritance to those born deaf, dumb, blind, or imbecile, and since these disabilities may exist in different degrees of intensity, there is room for difference of opinion upon eligibility for disbarment in specific cases. In some cases there are also members of the family who have attained personal property as the result of their own efforts. This may give occasion to problems of distinguishing between personal and communal property. Then, too, custom differs as to the right of widows to claim dowry rights in their deceased

husbands' property; and in some cases adopted sons are awarded special consideration in the division of estates. Moreover, the rules in the division of ancestral property differ somewhat from place to place as to the right to use wells, the making of rights of way to properties that can not be split up, the making of bequests for pious purposes, provision for debt, marriage, etc.<sup>2</sup> Thus, aside from its great complexity, the various traditional forms of landholding and inheritance, as we show in greater detail elsewhere, seem to work toward extreme conservatism and general cultural immobility.

### *The Units and Structures of Government*

**British India and the Independent States.** India, so far as units of government are concerned, is roughly divided into British India and the Independent States. Pondicherry and a few other small French possessions in southern India, and a few border states over which British rule is partially exercised, are minor exceptions. According to the 1931 Census, the 'British Provinces, including Burma, have a population of 271,749,312, while the Independent Indian States and Agencies have a population of 81,237,564 people.<sup>3</sup> The area of British India, including Burma, is 1,094,300 square miles, and of the Independent States 711,032 square miles.

The nine major provinces of British India are: Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, known as presidencies, Burma, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, and Assam. Each has its own local government under a governor appointed by the Crown, assisted to a limited extent by a legislature. The six minor provinces are Northwest Frontier Province, the Province of Delhi, British Baluchistan, Ajmere-Merwara, Coorg, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The minor provinces are administered by chief commissioners and not by governors.

The provincial governments have legislatures varying in functional scope and authority. The government also consists of executive departments which are divided into two groups, varying as their powers and duties are "reserved" or "transferred". The former include the departments of law, justice, police, the land, and others, and are administered by the Governor and his Executive Council; the latter include such departments as education, public health, and excise, and are administered by the Governor and ministers chosen by him from the provincial legislature. These two bodies work independently of each other, the Governor serving

<sup>2</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup>India in 1930-31, p. 146; The World Almanac, 1932, p. 699; Cumming, Sir John, Modern India, Oxford University Press, 1932.



as the binding link. The Executive Council, in the exercise of authority over the reserved functions of government, ultimately, through the Government of India, is answerable to the British Parliament, while the ministers dealing with the transferred functions of government are directly responsible to the legislative council. However, the Governor is granted extraordinary powers so that he can declare a state of emergency and override either or both executive departments and the legislative body. In the exercise of this authority, the Governor is answerable to the Crown. This division of the functions of government has been termed the "dyarchy", and its major purpose has been to induct the Indian leaders gradually into the active affairs of government. In the Central Government there is no dyarchy.

The Independent States number 562 and represent a wide variety of geographical, economic, social, political, and religious conditions. Hyderabad, with an area of 82,700 square miles and a population of 14,400,000 people, is one of the larger of these Independent States, while some of the smaller states have but a handful of inhabitants and cover the area of an average-sized American farm.<sup>4</sup>

The government of British India is vested in the Crown, and in England is represented by a Secretary of State for India, who is a member of the cabinet. This official is assisted by a council composed of a group of appointive advisors who are selected because of their knowledge of the country of India. This council must not be fewer than eight nor more than twelve in number. At present it is composed of both English and Indians. Since 1920 there has also been a High Commissioner for India acting as trade representative and agent for the central and provincial governments.<sup>5</sup>

The resident head of the Central Government of British India is a Governor-General or Viceroy, appointed by the Crown for a period usually of five years. He functions as the supreme military and civil authority, answerable to the Crown. The Viceroy is assisted by an Executive Council appointed by the Crown, and of the present seven members, three are Indians. The Central Government also has a Legislative Assembly. According to the Acts of 1919, the Lower House of this Assembly has 144 members, most of whom are elected by direct constituencies with a property qualification. In the Upper House, or Council of States, there are 60 members, 33 of whom are elected on a more restricted franchise. The Viceroy may veto any bill passed by the Legislative Assembly, or refer it to the Crown. The *swarajists*, or advocates of an inde-

<sup>4</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, p. 164; also, The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 12, p. 165.

pendent self-government, have established an extra-legal National Congress which presumes to exercise certain authority, but this organization is not recognized by all of the Indians, nor by the British, as a legal organ of government. In fact, this Congress is a political party, and in no valid sense a legislative body.

The Independent Indian States are governed by Indian princes, most of whom rule by hereditary rights, and some are said to be absolute monarchs. The more important of these princes have the advice of resident political officers appointed by the Crown. The degree of sovereignty exercised by the governments of these Independent States varies considerably. The more important ones control the internal affairs of their states and have their own revenues and armies, and pass their own laws. Some of the lesser independent governments are hardly more than magistracies. The authority of each ruler is determined by special treaties with the Crown, but the power of each, regardless of the size or importance of his state, is limited as to entering into alliances or armed disputes with each other or with foreign countries. The British Government also reserves the right to interfere in case of gross misgovernment.

The relation of the princes of the Independent States and the British Government, in recent years, on the whole, seems friendly and cooperative. This is said to be due to the fact that the British keep these rulers in power and protect them against revolt. In 1899 Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, in an address claimed the rulers of these states as his colleagues in the administration of the country. Other subsequent viceroys advanced the same idea in many practical ways, so that at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 the princes vied with one another in the offer of loyal service to the defense of the Empire. Several approaches since the beginning of the Twentieth Century had been made toward a council between the British Government and the princes, and upon a suggestion made by one of these princes at a conference, the King issued a proclamation in December, 1919, signifying his assent to the establishment of a Chamber of Princes. This was inaugurated in February, 1921. The value of these conferences has been to break down the isolation of certain states, to strengthen the position and promote the dignity of the princes, and to afford the opportunity of developing better government and sounder political doctrine among the states. These princes have expressed a lively interest in the current efforts toward constitutional reforms in India, and were represented at the various Round Table Conferences at London which convened to consider these reforms.\* It is apparent to many intel-

\**Ibid.*, p. 175.



ligent students of Indian affairs that the question of home rule in India as a whole will not and cannot be settled effectively and permanently without the full cooperation and participation of the Independent States.

**How British Rule Came About.** British rule in India has had a long and interesting history, interspersed by commercial and military rivalries with a number of other European countries, as well as with the rivalries and cooperative efforts of a number of the native rulers. Thus in order to gain an adequate perspective of English participation in the present-day political and economic affairs of India, and especially of her dealing with the swaraj movement, one needs to know something of the historical backgrounds of British rule in this country.

The accounts of the earliest organized contacts of the British with India, and for a long time thereafter, are essentially the history of the East India Company. In the 17th and 18th centuries, East India Companies were established by Holland, France, Denmark, Scotland, Spain, Austria, and Sweden, and on December 31, 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to such a company bestowing upon it the sole English rights of trading with the East Indies. The commercial pursuits carried on by this company and its successors were very profitable, which soon brought into Indian trade many independent British rivals and some from other countries. These rivalries, especially with trading companies from other countries, often led to armed hostility, which sometimes involved the mother countries. On the other hand, these conflicts were sometimes the Indian repercussions of the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War, and other prolonged intra-European military conflicts which also became lengthened westward into the French and Indian Wars among the American colonies. The struggles between the English and the French, and the English and Dutch were often bitter, and persisted until finally the Dutch gravitated largely toward the East Indian Islands, the British largely to the main land of India, Burma, and the Straits Settlements, while France, retaining Pondicherry and a few other small areas in India, withdrew her major oriental possessions to Indo-China. Thus the territorial divisions of the major Indian and Malayan countries remain even today.

The East India Company carried on various activities in different places. True, its original major aim was the commercial exploitation of the great economic wealth of India; but this exploitation also involved the making of settlements and the engaging in conflicts with rival companies and native princes. These

activities, in turn, called into play the development of numerous protective and supporting structures, such as military forces, forts, factories, credit institutions, political service, hospitals, railways, and the like; for practically every initial step taken toward the early development of the machinery for carrying on these functions of government and economic development was accompanied by conflicts with native peoples and the handicaps created by a difficult climate. Hence these efforts of the East India Company were essentially a colonization of India, and that is probably the main reason why the British ultimately won over their European rivals.

Historical footprints of the activities involved in overcoming these difficulties may be seen even today. The traveller in passing throughout India may have pointed out to him Fort St. George in Madras, Clive's Gate in Arcot, the site of the Black Hole in Calcutta, the Kashmir Gate in Delhi, and other historical mementoes calling to mind bitter conflicts and heroic deeds of such men of prominence as Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Minto, Lord Hardinge, Lord Dalhousie, Sir Henry Lawrence, and others. Many of these men, no doubt, were able leaders, and through military prowess, social reform, economic expansion, and political development, helped India to go forward in many ways along the lines of western civilization. But underneath it all there has been much unrest in the Indian population. Much of this westernizing of India has been both feared and hated by the Indians, particularly the leaders of religious thought; and for a long while many of the princes dethroned by British rule have sought a chance to regain their realms.

**The Sepoy Mutiny.** Perhaps the most spectacular exhibition of unrest shown toward British rule was the historic mutiny of 1857. In that year Bengal sepoys (soldiers), according to tradition, angered by cow's tallow being applied to their cartridges, mutinied. You may recall that as an aspect of religion the cow has been venerated by the Hindus. The mutiny spread throughout the Ganges Valley, resulting in the historic siege of Lucknow, the investment of Delhi and, withal, the loss of many thousands of lives on both sides of the conflict. But the mutineers lost, and this conflict put an end to the old East India Company which had held sway in India for more than two and a half centuries. Thus in 1858 the Crown took over the government of India, and the British Government has been in control ever since. This control, as the reader of current history knows, has been shared, especially of late, increasingly with the nationals.



### *Functions of Government*

**Protection: The Military and Police Force.** The various vicissitudes of the co-partnership of the British and the Indians in the government of India have made the presence of a mobile soldiery necessary. Since England took over the government of India in 1858, different reforms in the organization and the equipment of the army in India have been effected, but India's participation in the recent World War hastened certain of the movements. The general result of recent changes has been to place the Indian soldier on pretty much the same basis as the British as to personal and military equipment, though the senior commanding officers are yet British. These reforms also resulted in the organization of the Imperial forces on a national rather than on a quasi-local basis, and the selection of the more war-like peoples for army service. However, many of the Independent States have military forces of their own, which, under certain conditions, may be placed at the disposal of the Central Government. The military forces, supported by Indian taxation, are divided into three divisions: the army, the navy, and the air forces. In ordinary times the British contingent of these forces is relatively small, amounting to from 60,000 to 70,000 men, or about one-third of the entire standing army. The menace of the wild Afghan tribes beyond the borders of the northwest, the suppression of frequent uprisings in parts of Burma, occasional important clashes between communal religious groups within India proper, and the maintenance of peace broken by the *swarnj* movement, call for the presence in India of a well disciplined, highly mobile, and discreet military force.

The police system of India is said to have been evolved out of a force established in Sind by Sir Charles Napier in the Forties of the last century, and was modelled somewhat after the plan of organization of the Irish constabulary of those days. Except in the Presidency towns which have their own Police Acts, Indian police are now organized, disciplined, and controlled according to the Police Act of 1861, and by rules made thereunder by Provisional Governments to suit local conditions, or by separate Provincial Police Acts.<sup>7</sup> Each district has a regular force under a superintendent who is usually a European, and subordinate for most purposes to the district magistrate. Each district is divided into a number of police stations, each in charge of a station-house officer who usually bears the rank of Sub-Inspector. The police station or *thana* is the basic work unit of the Indian police system. As a rule the sub-inspector at the thana is the first officer to receive the report

<sup>7</sup>India, 1930-31, p. 520.

of a serious crime committed within his jurisdiction, and upon him devolves the duty of investigation and report upon these cases as well as upon cases sent him by the magistrate, and also upon occasion the duty of making arrests. In many parts of India this officer is the only representative of government for miles around.<sup>8</sup>

The police force, under Indian conditions, is considered efficient, and contains certain indigenous elements of great antiquity. For example, over most of India the old pre-British village watchman, the *chaukidar*, still exists. His first duty is to report crime; but like the *thanadar*, his functions are many and varied, including the arrest of offenders, general aid to the police, surveillance over bad characters, assistance in investigations, and the general supplying of local information.<sup>9</sup> In usual times the police force of India, reaching down to the most remote interior village, numbers about 200,000 and is maintained at a cost of about 8,000,000 pounds sterling. This force is strengthened by a small body of military police along certain frontier areas.

It is said that jails in India are relatively cheerful places, and are being improved. In 1924 there was a prison population of about 127,000, which, in comparison to the population, is a small number indeed. Leaving aside certain criminal tribes, some frontier tribes noted for their inclination to pillage and murder, and persons engaged in other internal disturbances above mentioned, the Indians generally are law-abiding, especially so far as criminality is concerned. However, in some sections, the same cannot be said of misunderstandings of a civil nature. In many of the rural areas in particular, there are numerous civil suits involving boundary lines, water rights, etc., and there has been much turmoil connected with civil disobedience in the *swaraj* movement. But the latter, for the most part, has been an exemplification of *ahimsa*, or conflict conducted by means of non-resistance, non-participation, and non-violence.

**Rendering Justice: The Courts.** A number of the larger divisions, such as the Bombay, Madras, and Bengal Presidencies, have High Courts established under charter by the Crown. Others have judicial commissioners established by local legislation. From these various courts judicial appeals may be made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England. Below these courts are district and sessions courts which perform the ordinary civil and criminal judicial work of the respective provinces. However the jurisdiction and the general nature of these courts vary somewhat throughout the country.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 530.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 530.



The *Panchayat*, or council of village elders, is a quasi-judicial body whose existence runs far back into Indian history. In some places it is given legal status in the disposal of petty cases and the conduct of cooperative societies and other administrative functions; but its greatest function is the more or less extra-legal settlement of petty caste disputes and petty troubles arising between individuals. In exercising these functions it is guided by custom firmly supported by public opinion. The village head-man, who often receives his position through heredity, by custom and sometimes by law, also performs many functions of a quasi-judicial nature. And since the advent of the English business and professional man, and the coming of the missionaries from countries of the West, the white "sahibs" are also frequently called on to serve as arbiters in petty disputes among the villagers.

**Communication.** In reviewing very briefly the means of communication in India today, a few introductory comments may be of interest to the reader.

In the first place, the maintenance and control of railways, the telegraph system, post offices, commerce and shipping, customs and tariffs, currency, public debt, military and foreign affairs, and a number of other functions dealing in one way or another with transportation and communication, are responsibilities of the Central Government.<sup>10</sup>

In the second place, as shown elsewhere in this account of India and her people, the masses of this country are illiterate, and their communication is limited further by the presence of a great number of languages and dialects. Thus the circulation of newspapers is highly circumscribed, and the dispersal of the meagre news from the outside world is by the village reader and by word of mouth. Such a handicap of ignorance and lack of social contacts makes the people gullible and fit subjects for the chicanery of rascals and fanatical reformers. Yet in discussing this subject with an American who has lived for a number of years in India, he stated: "It is amazing to discover that news which travels by 'grapevine telegraph' in India is much more authentic than that read in the newspapers with particular axes to grind. Many times I discovered that India has a system of news-sending that seems more rapid than the use of the telegraph system."

However, a pronounced limitation in the extension of post offices, and telegraphic and telephone systems in rural areas makes communication slow and laborious. Yet in 1929-30 there were in the country 23,888 post offices, and in the following year there were

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 228-29.

104,312 miles of telegraphic wire in the Government Postal service.<sup>11</sup> Though most of the larger places are connected by telegraph as a part of the postal system, the country is so vast that large areas do not have this form of service, and the telephone service is probably even more limited. The writer recalls that while a patient in an important mission hospital in South India, there were no telephones in this hospital; and messages from one part of the mission to another were sent, often many miles, by runners with "chits" in their hands.

Even in many rural areas not reached by telegraphic service, postal service is maintained, often under most difficult circumstances. This service is often performed by runners who encounter dangers of flood, wild animals, robbers, and death-dealing diseases like cholera; yet in 1929-30 there were 14,813 of these runners who, besides collecting and distributing mail, performed many other services such as the payment of government pensions, the collection of salt revenue, the sale of quinine, the collection of custom charges on dutiable goods carried in the mails, the provision of banking facilities through the Post Office Savings Bank, and other valuable services that worked toward public welfare and convenience.<sup>12</sup> As shown elsewhere, the cinema, as yet, has not, to any appreciable extent, entered into the cultural and recreational life of the villages, and to but a minor extent in the cities,<sup>13</sup> and such films as are shown are largely of foreign origin.

But there are other agencies of communication that are more purely Indian in nature. The open-air shandy, or public market, the bazaar, the mela or religious festival, the pilgrimage, the camel and bullock trade caravans, the recent women's movement, and various other activities connected with the swaraj movement, have brought to the city populations in particular, and to the village peoples to a lesser extent, news and ideas from the outside world. Indian students in considerable numbers are attending western universities and are returning home with new ideas and new energies; and as shown in another chapter of this book, Christian missionaries since the time of the Christian era, have lived among the people of India, and in fairly recent decades have established there colleges and hospitals, and have otherwise inaugurated reforms along many lines. The tourist trade, which comes to this country in fairly small volume, is another means of bringing in considerable amounts of money and new ideas from other countries.

However, taking due account of all these sources of enlighten-

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 271-276.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 172-75.

<sup>13</sup>Crossey, Paul F., *The Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, pp. 141-42.



ment, we are forced to conclude that contacts with the outside world are largely for city populations. We should keep in mind that the vast majority of the population lives in the villages, and vast numbers of these villages are sequestered in quiet and isolated sectors of the world's activities. Consequently, these villages get very little in the way of formal schooling, or contacts with the outside world. More will be said along these lines in the next chapter, which deals with Indian schools.

**Financing the Government.** The manner of tax collection in the villages has been described elsewhere, so we shall now confine our considerations to the support of the Central Government and to what the payment of public funds goes. The following table for the financial year of 1928-29 presents the major facts as to these matters.<sup>14</sup>

#### GOVERNMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURES

Sources of Income	Revenue in millions of pounds sterling	Object of Expenditures	Expenditures in millions of pounds sterling
Customs .....	37.5	Defence .....	45.5
Taxes on Income .....	12.8	Debt .....	11.1
Salt .....	5.2	Civil Administration .....	8.8
Opium .....	2.6	Other .....	9.0
Contribution by Railways .....	4.1		
Other .....	10.2		
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>72.4</b>		<b>72.4</b>

Certain budgetary items in this table, perhaps, call for comment. In the first place, however, it should be noted that none of the so-called "nation-building" services are provided for here, since they have been charged to the provincial revenues. In the next place, the costs of defense, the single largest item of expenditure, might seem exorbitant. Whether or not that is true is a matter that we can not settle here, for it is a relative matter that must take into account the frontiers that require defense from external aggressions, as well as internal troubles of a political and a communal nature with which the police, alone, sometimes are not able to cope; and it must take into account the geographical location, the size, and the importance of India as a unit in the British Empire of Nations. We should be reminded that the presence in India of a small, efficient military force is not the case of the military occupation of a conquered land, as some unreasoning critics profess to think; but as in most civilized countries of the world, it is an assurance of protection from the invasion of external enemies, and of the maintenance of a responsible and continuous govern-

<sup>14</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 32, p. 371. See also India in 1930-31, Chs. VI. and IX.



FIG. IV. VIEWS OF THE HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS. 1, Mt. Everest; 2, Darjeeling at sunset; 3, A view of the Happy Valley Tea Garden, Darjeeling.





ment. However, in certain limited circles, this is a moot question that, obviously, we do not have time here to analyze fully. It should be observed further that since 1925 the railway finances have been separated from the general account, and the railways have been made self-regulating. However, the railways contribute one per cent of the outstanding capital of the commercial lines, with certain adjustments due to losses incurred in the maintenance of certain strategic lines. As to the sources of income, it should be stated further, that under pressure of Government, the production of opium has been highly limited in area, with the objective of the entire extinction of the export trade in this commodity by 1935. A recent news report states that this objective has been attained.

Elsewhere we have shown what Government, and other agencies cooperating with it, are doing to promote: improvements in the means of transportation, improvements in agricultural production and financing, the eradication and control of diseases among the population and the livestock, village uplift, and other beneficent enterprises. In spite of certain conditions resulting from the depression in economic affairs throughout the world, it appears, on the whole, that Government is desirous of promoting the welfare of India and her people in many direct and indirect ways.

### *Summary*

From our very brief and partial examination of Indian Government, we are impressed with its complexity, and yet with its efficiency, in spite of handicaps under which it operates. In fact, because of governmental supervision and the law-abiding character of the population, so well-ordered is Indian society generally that one is led to feel a personal safety in travelling there that is not always felt in many of the large cities of the West. Though such handicaps as illiteracy, the great diversity of languages, communal strife, the caste system, custom, a torrid climate, poverty, disease, non-cooperation, and other serious problems beset government, however wise and generous it may be, yet one is led to wonder how a responsible government is maintained as efficiently and continuously as has been the case. However, the British, on the whole, have wisely kept neutral in communal strifes, have interfered as little as possible with tribal and caste customs, have encouraged the extension of railways, roads, and telegraphic lines, and have promoted hospitalization, education, irrigation, and other beneficent reforms about as fast as funds could be procured therefor and the nationals induced to respond.



The carrying on of these enterprises has brought into leadership positions many native and foreign men and women of rare training and ability. Most of these leaders and officials met personally by the writer impressed him as having the highest welfare of India at heart. While some extreme swarajist leaders seemed to overlook the nation-building accomplishments of their English friends, there were others who recognized these accomplishments and wished to work out cooperatively with their English colleagues a beneficent and a peaceful social order. Solid accomplishments toward this worthy end have been attained to a far greater extent than many realize.

Perhaps one of the most significant recent movements in government has been toward the induction of the nationals into official responsibility, as rapidly and as safely as possible. The writer, after spending several months in India, travelling throughout the land, passing from city to city and from village to village, and meeting missionaries, governmental officials, college professors, social workers, and villagers, is led to look upon the final outcome of the movement toward self-government with optimism. Of course, particularly in the cities, the swaraj movement, at times, has grown tense, but the great mass of villagers, with occasional exceptions, have not shown a very marked intensity of swaraj feeling. While opinion was divided among the intellectuals on certain of the swaraj demands, many expressed the opinion that the nationals, unassisted by outside help, are not at present able to take over successfully the government in its entirety. They hold that self-government, under dominion rule or some other form, is a desirable *ultimate* objective, but want the process to be gradual. In this, it is the writer's opinion, most of the British in responsible governmental positions agree. Many swarajists, after viewing the demands at the London Round Table Conferences of the princes of the Independent States, the Mohammedans, the outcastes, and possibly other minority groups, for representation in government, have begun to view swaraj in a somewhat different light. Some of their leaders, such as Mr. Gandhi, have now begun to take a more positive and realistic view of the difficulties of obtaining a self-government that would at once be democratic, humanitarian, efficient and permanent, so have turned their attention to a renewed emphasis upon the necessity of removing untouchability and other age-old handicaps to the reforms in government they demand. However, the impartial student of Indian political history can note that since the set-back to self-government caused by the bloody Mutiny of 1857, there have taken place, in more recent years, positive steps toward self-government. These include the Curzon Reforms (1898), the More-

ly-Minto Reforms translated into the India Council Act of Parliament (1909), the Montagu-Chelmsford Report incorporated into an act providing India a new constitution (1919), the Report of the Parliamentary Commission under the presidency of Sir John Simon (1930), the discussions of the Round Table Conferences at London, and the Parliamentary Act of 1935 providing an All-India Central Government. These history-making episodes have contributed much toward clarifying the issues and providing progressive steps toward ultimate political autonomy of some kind in India.



## Chapter V

### INDIAN SCHOOLS

One interested in the structures of government and the social heritages of India sooner or later will inquire about her schools. This fact has led to the preparation of the present chapter. But before presenting a discussion of the schools of India, we should list here, for the sake of completeness, a number of other important educational agencies which are not described here but which are treated in subsequent chapters. These are the village itself and the various practices and restraints required of its inhabitants; the caste system with its regimen of life and apprenticeship system; the family; the mela, the shandy, the agricultural fair; the agricultural school and demonstration farm; the temple, with its priests and holy men; the ashram with its groups of philosophers; the Christian mission; the various reform *samajes* (organizations), etc., all of which, in many direct and indirect ways, contribute to the education of the youth of that country. The education provided by many of these agencies, it is true, is wholly or largely non-literary in nature; nevertheless, as we shall show more fully later, it is practical for the sort of life the average village family leads.

#### *The Present Status of the Schools of India*

**The Number and Kinds of Recognized Schools.** Many westerners uninformed on the schools of India imagine that that country has no schools worthy of note and that there is no love for learning in that country. However, in giving the schools of India, both mission and non-mission, a broad survey, it appears that the school advantages of India are much better than many might be led to expect, and there are a surprisingly large number of her inhabitants seeking the fruits of a formal schooling.

The following table presents statistics on the "recognized" schools of all kinds in India for the years 1926-27,<sup>1</sup> i. e., schools

<sup>1</sup>Stipple, Leslie B., *The Larmen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 238, quoting from the *Report of the Progress of Education in India*, Vol. II. These data do not include Burma. Mission schools include both Protestant and Catholic.



FIG. VII. INDIAN HOMES. 1. *The beautiful home of the Poet Tagore, Santiniketan*; 2. *A well-to-do village home, Gosaba. Note the granary at the left rear*; 3. *A sweeper's mud cottage.*





that comply with the prescribed course of study and otherwise meet governmental requirements. However, there are many schools which are not recognized, hence are not accounted for in the data of this table.

# THE RECOGNIZED SCHOOLS OF INDIA, 1926-27.

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY\*

(Progress of Education in India, 1922-27, Vol. II)

KIND OF INSTITUTIONS	Male		NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS		All Schools	
	Mission	Total	Mission	Total	Mission	Total
Universities.....	—	13	—	—	—	13
Colleges.....	42	281	13	26	55	307
High Schools.....	190	2,295	101	220	291	2,515
Middle Schools.....	—	—	—	604	—	7,319
English.....	200	3,089	139	—	339	—
Vernacular.....	24	3,626	38	—	82	—
Primary Schools.....	10,061	158,753	1,097	26,076	11,158	184,829
Teacher-Training.....	33	460	67	137	100	597
Others.....	187	8,424	70	159	257	8,583
TOTAL.....	10,757	176,941	1,545	27,222	12,302	204,163

NUMBER OF PUPILS		NUMBER OF PUPILS	
Universities.....	5,628	—	5,628
Colleges.....	15,212	806	16,018
High Schools.....	72,703	19,328	92,031
Middle Schools.....	—	75,343	918,077
English.....	27,442	16,386	43,828
Vernacular.....	2,403	7,214	9,617
Primary Schools.....	340,091	81,091	421,182
Teacher-Training.....	1,906	2,198	4,104
Others.....	5,774	3,171	8,945
TOTAL.....	465,531	130,194	595,725

\*These do not include Burma. Mission schools include both Protestant and Catholic.

This table presents a few items of great significance with respect to Indian education: First, it would appear from these data that India has a rather large number of higher educational institutions,—thirteen universities and 307 colleges. However, since the



date reported here, there have been five other universities added to the list,<sup>2</sup> and probably a number of colleges as well.

Second, relatively little provision is made for the higher education of women. It might appear from this table that none of the universities are open to women; but this assumption would be erroneous, for some of the universities, such as the Hindu University at Benares, and a number of the colleges, such as Wilson College at Bombay, and the Scottish Church College at Calcutta, are co-educational,<sup>3</sup> and there are also various women's colleges which have standing in the university system. Even then, for the year 1926-27, there were but 1436 women enrolled in these colleges, which is indeed, as compared with the number of men enrolled, a pitifully small number. The same condition, though to not so pronounced an extent, holds for high schools and teacher-training institutions. On these levels of education there are more schools open to women and more women are enrolled as students.

Third, missions, in so far as numbers of schools and numbers of pupils are concerned, are playing a relatively small role in present-day Indian education. Only about six per cent of the recognized schools are mission schools and six per cent of the pupils are taught in mission schools. Moreover, it should be remembered that in usual times about thirty per cent of the cost of the recognized mission schools is paid by Government as grants-in-aid; but this amount, in more recent years, owing to shortage of government income, has been reduced considerably. On the other hand, missions seem to be playing somewhat the role of leadership in higher education, in that eighteen per cent of all colleges, twelve per cent of all high schools, and seventeen per cent of all teacher-training schools are operated by missions. Missions also make a relatively favorable showing in the education of girls and women, especially in teacher-training.

Fourth, in view of the vast population of the country and the high esteem traditionally held among certain classes for learning, it is noted that but a very small percentage of Indian childhood and youth is provided the means of education, or is accepting the means provided. Thus Mayhew writes: "Nearly three-fourths of the villages of India have no schools . . . and out of 38 millions of children who should be in school, only eight millions are on the rolls."<sup>4</sup> And as to the permanency of these educational results, he

<sup>2</sup>India in 1930-31, p. 748. The universities are: Agra, Aligarh, Allahabad, Andhra, Annamalai, Benares, Bombay, Calcutta, Dacca, Delhi, Lucknow, Madras, Mysore, Nagpur, Oomana, Patna, Punjab (Lahore), Rangoon.

<sup>3</sup>Report of the Lindsay Commission, pp. 14, 250, 252, Oxford University Press, 1931.

<sup>4</sup>Mayhew, Arthur, *The Education of India*, pp. 227-28, Faber and Gwyer, London, 1925.

states further, "There is a relapse of 39 per cent into illiteracy within five years."<sup>3</sup>

But in order to show how India ranks with other countries as to the percentage of the population in school, we quote, as for the year 1922, from Olcott, an authority on Indian education:<sup>4</sup>

British India	3.48 per cent
Japan	14.30 per cent
Great Britain	16.50 per cent
United States	22.70 per cent

It should be noted further in this connection that the rather meagre showing in school enrollment presented by India is in part due to the poor educational advantages offered certain less favored classes; for during the year 1917, there were enrolled in Indian schools only 1.04 per cent of all the untouchables; 1.34 per cent of the aboriginal tribes; and 0.45 per cent of the criminal tribes.<sup>5</sup>

Indian leaders, however, are aware of the backwardness of their country along educational lines, and are making an effort to correct the situation. Thus the provinces, encouraged by grants from the Central Government, are improving the facilities for village education, and Bengal (1930) and a number of other provincial governments have accepted the principle of compulsory primary education. But such problems as communal strife, the separate education of boys and girls, the poverty of the taxpayers, poor roads, the dearth of competent teachers, tradition, and the like, will have to be solved before universal compulsory education can proceed very far in India.<sup>6</sup> But these rather discouraging conditions, applying to the village schools in general, should not obscure the more pleasing provisions made for certain types of education in the cities. For example, there are the Elphinstone High School and the Anjuman-I-Islam School of the City of Bombay, and numerous colleges and universities throughout the land, whose grandeur of architecture and whose provisions of libraries, museums, and other facilities for instruction, eloquently bespeak the high respect in which certain classes of people hold education.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>4</sup>Olcott, Mason, *Village Schools in India*, p. 22, Y.M.C.A. Press, Calcutta, 1925.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>6</sup>Readers interested in a more extended account of Indian schools are referred to Professor Sipple's and Dr. Hendrick's chapters in the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry Report, Vol. IV, and to other standard works such as the Report of the Saddler Commission; Little-Hallie, R., *The Progress of Education in India*; Olcott, Mason, *Village Schools in India*; the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture; the Report of the Lindsay Commission; Van Doren, A. B., *Fourteen Experiments in Rural Education*; and others.

<sup>7</sup>For an excellent description of these educational institutions, see Furneaux, J. H., *Glimpse of India*, C. E. Burrows, Publisher, Bombay and London, 1928.



**The Organization and Support of Indian Schools.** The reader will be interested to note how Indian schools are organized and supported. In a Governmental report to Parliament, we read: "The control of public instruction, is, as a rule, exercised by the Provincial Government through the Director of Public Instruction. The Government, however, generally deals direct with such Universities as there are on questions of higher education. Affiliated with the University or Universities are the colleges which prepare students for University examinations. Below the colleges come the high schools, which prepare students for the school-leaving or similar examinations that qualify for admission to the lower branches of the public service. Side by side with the high schools are the middle schools, which teach the first few standards only of the secondary school course; there are also in some places separate high and middle schools for girls. Below the secondary schools come the large number of primary schools both for boys and girls, in which instruction is given in the vernaculars to the vast mass of the people. As a rule, the Province is subdivided into a number of divisions, under the control of divisional inspectors, who are responsible for visiting the schools within their respective areas and reporting them to the Director of Public Instruction."<sup>10</sup> There are also local district boards whose functions are the general administrative control of the schools coming under their authority; and the larger cities have their own municipal school systems.

Besides these schools ordinarily set apart by the public for the education of its children and youth, there are several kinds of schools or centers designed for adult education. Among these are the seed farms, veterinary stations, animal studs, agricultural departments in middle and high schools, and the extension service of the agricultural colleges and Governmental Departments of Agriculture. Government also promotes adult education in rural areas by means of special lectures and demonstrations on health and allied subjects, encourages night schools for adults and children, encourages the establishment of libraries and the formation of literary societies, and makes an effort to get medical men to settle in the villages. There is also a great variety of private and mission schools dealing with the usual fields of education, both of an intramural and an extension sort, and with many special kinds of education such as the training of midwives, compounders (druggists), secretaries for cooperative societies, etc. These, whether or not recognized by Government, are usually working unselfishly and with varying degrees of effectiveness toward banishing illiteracy and otherwise promoting social welfare.

<sup>10</sup>India in 1900-01, pp. 623-30.

At this juncture it may be of interest to take note of school costs. The total expenditures on the recognized schools of India for the year 1929-30 were as follows:<sup>11</sup>

From Government Funds .....	Rs. 132,538,044
From Board and Municipal Funds.....	42,465,600
From Fees .....	60,461,368
From Other Sources .....	38,817,006
Total	Rs. 274,282,018

And in order to show comparative educational costs in India and other countries, Olcott reports the amount per capita spent by the entire population as follows:

British India (1922-23) .....	Rs. 0.77
United Kingdom (1918-19) .....	17.3
United States (1919-20) .....	37.0

The monthly wages received by the average primary teacher in 1917 was Rs. 9, or about three dollars. In 1918, the average teacher in one-room rural schools of the United States, where cost of living was not over five times as high as in India, received the equivalents of Rs. 189 monthly.<sup>12</sup> Thus, many a village teacher is forced to eke out a mere subsistence income by part-time service as village post-master, or licensed quinine vendor, or letter writer for illiterates, or manager of some small business. Sometimes he even receives free food from his patrons. This accounts for the low esteem in which teaching is often held in India.

**Direct Educational Support by the Central Government.** As in certain western countries, the Central Government's participation in education is limited. Since the Government of India Act of 1919, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms resulting therefrom, there has been a transfer of certain administrative matters, including education, from the Central Government to the Provincial Governments. As noted in a previous chapter in the discussion of "dyarchy" in the provincial governments, education thus became one of the "transferred" divisions of government, i. e., was placed under the control of the Governor working with ministers selected from members of the provincial legislature, and responsible, through that body, to the Indian electorate.<sup>13</sup>

But the Central Government yet retains certain limited direct control of health and education which should be noted briefly

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 629.

<sup>12</sup>Olcott, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 177.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 628-29.



here. The control of infectious diseases by preventing their introduction from outside by land or sea, or their spread from province to province within the country, or their dissemination to other countries, after having originated in India, is reserved to the Central Government. Such regulations also cover the travel of pilgrims to holy places. Through the Medical Statistical Bureau, the Central Government makes reports on public health in India, and also undertakes to represent provincial governments at international conferences dealing with medical matters. In matters of formal education, the Government of India is also responsible for public education in certain areas administered directly by the Central Government, for control over Chief's Colleges, the University of Delhi, and the denominational Universities of Benares and Aligarh. And as mentioned elsewhere, the Central Government, in harmony with the objectives and acts of such organizations as the All-India Women's Conference, a voluntary organization consisting of a number of the leading women citizens, has encouraged social reform dealing with the abolition of child-marriage, the improvement of the conditions of labor for women and children, the promotion of education of women, etc.<sup>14</sup>

### *Historical Background of the Indian Educational System*

The Indian University and College. Mazumder, in his *History of Education in Ancient India*, divides Indian history into: (1) Ancient History, which extends from about 2000 B. C., to the middle of the Seventh Century, A. D., (2) Medieval History, which extends from about the Fall of the Kingdom of Harsha, 647 A. D. to the rise of the British power in India, the middle of the Eighteenth Century and (3) Modern History, which extends from the middle of the Eighteenth century to the present.<sup>15</sup>

According to this authority, the Ancient period was the halcyon days of Indian culture and education. During this period he states that early marriages were rare, the absolute seclusion of women was unknown, women had high social status, and idol worship had not been introduced. This period also produced the Vedic Hymns, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads, and the Sutras, which constitute the great body of philosophical and religious literature of that country. And Parishads, or Brahmanical colleges were established, free of charge to pupils, by kings, princes, and the wealthy, who considered it a sacred duty to help liberally those interested in education. There also grew up during this period a number of famous universities. In King Asoka's reign during

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 414, 459, 460.

<sup>15</sup>Mazumder, Narendranath, *A History of Education in Ancient India*, p. 11, Macmillan Co., Ltd., Calcutta, 1916.

the Third Century B. C., Taxila became a popular center for the study of Indian art, science, and medicine,<sup>16</sup> and at Nalandra, there was offered a rather varied program of studies including Grammar, Logic, Medicine, Philosophy and Metaphysics, Buddhist canonical law, the Vedas, Sanskrit, Pali, and other miscellaneous subjects. According to Mazumder, the universities of this period were monastic, advanced learning being carried on principally by the priests in the groves and monasteries.<sup>17</sup>

With the fall of Harsha's Kingdom, centuries of confusion and strife ensued, including internecine wars and a number of invasions. The most famous of these invasions resulted in the establishment of the Mogul Empire. This period, according to Mazumder, introduced the seclusion of women, the caste system, idol worship, the early marriage of girls, and the general lack of literacy, especially among women.<sup>18</sup> Such occurred, even though some of the Mogul Kings, as Akbar and Shah Jahan, were patrons of the arts, schools, and temples. While during this period some of the greatest architectural art of Indian history was produced, achievement in literature waned greatly and Hindu learning suffered severe losses.

The Modern Period may be called the Period of the Renaissance of Hindu education, but the greatest impetus to this awakening has been since the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The Central Government, in the Indian Education Policy of 1913, expressed an appreciation of ancient Hindu civilization. As a concrete expression of this interest, by special acts of the Central Assembly and through Central Governmental support, there have been established three important universities in India: The University of Benares (1915), Aligarh Muslim University (1920), and Delhi University (1922). The University of Benares, growing out of the Central Hindu College, aims to promote the study of the Hindu Shastras and Sanskrit literature in order to preserve and popularize Hindu culture. It also offers instruction and research in the arts and sciences of many kinds, professional training of many sorts, and aims to promote indigenous industries and to develop the character of Indian youth through the study and practice of ethics and religion.<sup>19</sup> The Aligarh Muslim University, growing out of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, has about the same objectives for the development of interest in the Moslem culture and religion as the University of Benares has for the Hindus. These two universities are supported by grants from the Government, and by private endowments and donations. Delhi University is under

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>19</sup>India in 1920-31, pp. 464-6.



the direct control of the Government of India, with His Excellency, the Viceroy, as Chancellor. This university is composed of a number of constituent residential colleges offering a varied program of studies. A women's college was established as a part of the University in 1924. The major purpose of the University is to offer better higher educational facilities at India's capital.<sup>20</sup> The fifteen other universities scattered throughout the various provinces are supported by these provinces and by private endowments and gifts.

Originally most of the Indian universities were examining bodies, established primarily for testing the attainments of pupils in colleges often widely separated geographically and culturally. The old universities are now being revised so as to be both teaching and examining bodies. An aspect of this revision is a system of affiliation of colleges under university organization and control. Thus there are affiliated with the universities, colleges scattered throughout the country, as well as on campus, which prepare students for the university examinations.<sup>21</sup> In addition, there is a movement abroad to relegate preliminary work to the intermediate college and to confine the universities to higher instruction.

Many profess to see in this system of university organization, particularly in its examinations and regulations, a hurtful domination of higher education, even reaching down to and including the secondary schools. The Commission on Christian Higher Education in India (1931) points out clearly what appear to be handicaps to Christian colleges imposed by the acceptance of Government grants-in-aid, the university examination system, university regulations, and certain other factors which seem to undermine the prestige of Christian higher educational institutions. But, on the whole, this commission's report on these matters is optimistic, since it sees countervailing advantages accruing to this relationship of the colleges and universities, and points out a suitable means of escape from the objectionable phases of this relationship.<sup>22</sup>

However, a more vital question can be asked, and that is: Are colleges and universities meeting the vital instructional and research needs of the country? The Commission on Christian Higher Education evidently thinks this question is not adequately answered, for it strongly advises Christian colleges to create and maintain a system of extension and research. Since this report came from the press, several of these colleges are attempting to carry out this recommendation. It has also been charged by some critics that higher education, both as to expenditures and the numbers of people in-

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 464, 472.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 627, 629.

<sup>22</sup>Report of the Commission on Christian Higher Education in India, especially Chs. 4 and 5, Oxford University Press, 1931.

volved, seems to be emphasized out of proportion to its value to the masses. In fact, many think that elementary education is relatively slighted, and that the educational system as it is now constituted is top-heavy. The writer is not inclined to regard this criticism as serious, in itself; but there is another criticism of Indian higher education that seems to have considerable validity. There seems to be a vast number of Indian advanced scholars whose efforts do not seem to be directed along productive lines in terms of India's urgent needs. Today India needs a large number of technical experts in the field of medicine, sanitary engineering, municipal government, finance, agriculture, education, transportation, business organization, and the like; but a very large proportion of her college graduates are B. A., or L. L. B. graduates who have an eye on Government service, often of a more or less clerical nature. Many of these graduates are unemployed, and much of the social unrest of India, no doubt, can be traced to this fact. Indian higher educational institutions, according to the opinion of many constructive critics, are not turning out the expert leadership the country needs so urgently; thus her higher educational advantages are not being used to the best purposes. Perhaps a similar criticism, in varying degree of emphasis, could rightly be made of almost all civilized countries; but especially for India this should be a challenge and a cause for critical self-examination on the part of all her higher educational institutions, both public and private, mission and non-mission.

**Higher Education and Research.** In the foregoing discussion of higher education in India, there has been no intention of belittling the scholarly work being done at the various universities, colleges, and research institutes in the fields of letters and science. In fact, along certain lines, notable research of a scholarly nature and with practical results is being accomplished by these institutions. For example, at the University of Calcutta, Sir C. V. Raman, F. R. S., has made important investigations in the radiation effect when transparent substances are illumined from a mercury lamp or other suitable sources, through the photographing of the resulting scattered rays by means of a spectroscope; and the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, through the different members of its staff, has made important discoveries in the diagnosis, control, and cure of a number of diseases more or less peculiar to the Orient, such as leprosy, bubonic plague, cholera, kala-azar, various nutritional diseases, etc. In fact this school is generally considered one of the best of its kind in the world. Under the supervision of Col. McCarrison at the Pasteur Institute at Coonoor, important investigations in nutrition have been made; and numerous other research



agencies are attacking the various problems of the eradication of infectious, parasitic, and nutritional diseases so common to India and that so seriously impede her progress. The various provincial agricultural departments, the agricultural colleges, the Imperial Institutes of Agricultural and Veterinary Research of Pusa and Muktesar, as well as some of the Christian missions institutes and schools of agriculture, have done valuable work toward producing improved strains of wheat, rice, cotton, lentils, etc., and the control of diseases and insect pests; and there has gone forward at some of these institutions considerable research in the production and maintenance of better livestock.

It is to be observed, however, that research has been given other fields of interest. Rao Bahadar L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, of Calcutta University, and others in recent years, have made important research contributions in anthropology; and since Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty, a renewed interest has been taken in archaeology so that considerable archaeological excavation has been made of many of the famous prehistoric and ancient cities, temples, and places of learning, especially in the Indus basin and the hilly region west of the Indus. Likewise important researches are in progress in forestry, geology, mathematics, and other specialized subjects promoted by the universities and research foundations.<sup>23</sup> Government, in many direct and indirect ways, is encouraging these researches, and private foundations and individuals are assisting with men and money. Thus, today many able and devoted scholars, both native and foreign, are wrestling with the numerous problems that beset Indian social welfare in its various departments, and we may well look to the future with considerable optimism as to the ultimate results. The most important problem probably connected with this research is getting it accepted in practical ways by the teeming masses who are so badly handicapped by illiteracy, superstition and conservatism.

**The Elementary Schools.** The reader when reflecting upon the apparently low status of Indian elementary schools, especially as compared with the schools of Japan and other highly literate countries, and in the want of further basic facts, may be inclined to seek someone to criticize. In fact, there are those who criticize the "British overlords" for not providing the masses better educational advantages. Others viewing the subject from a different angle are inclined to criticize the apparent stupidity and lack of hunger for learning on the part of the masses. And yet others commit the error of assuming that the illiterate masses have a low Intelligence Quotient. Such assumptions are wrong. It is probable that in latent

<sup>23</sup>India in 1930-31, pp. 176, 325, 489, 522, etc.

mental ability the masses of India will show up favorably with any other modern country, and one who has taken the pains to look into the historical backgrounds of Indian illiteracy and Indian schools cannot place much store upon an intemperate criticism of the British. The various climatic, racial, and cultural factors that have made Indian civilization rather unique, are, no doubt, most to blame for these conditions. But after viewing the entire educational background of contemporary Indian society, the sort of life imposed by the climate and other geographical and social factors, and the practical non-literary sort of education given by other agencies, one is made to question the emphasis that some critics place upon the urgent general need among the masses of literacy, *per se*; and one is equally inclined to question much of the academic sort of education so generally imported from western countries. To treat this matter adequately would lead one into a greater historical detail than the limits of this chapter would allow. However, there are a few matters that we should present here in order that we may keep a clear and unbiased perspective of Indian education.

In the first place: "Primary schools in the modern sense probably did not exist in earlier times, but we find . . . that schools for elementary education did exist at the time of Buddha, (6th Century, B. C.), who followed the usual customs . . . and went to the writing schools to practice well all figures, writings, calculations . . . and moral precepts."<sup>11</sup> Nor since earlier times, owing to the lack of integration between British India and the Free States, a multiplicity of languages, caste, and other handicaps, can it be said that India has had a national educational system comparable with that of many other countries. Until there is developed a greater civil and social homogeneity among these diverse elements, it seems probable that she can never have such a system. As shown more fully later in this chapter, indigenous Indian education always seems to have been highly voluntary and deeply religious in its nature, which would seem to make its regimentation on a national basis and for utilitarian ends very difficult. In fact, in the earliest times, in lieu of formal schools, the head of each family as a *rishi* performed sacrifices and composed hymns which he transmitted to his son. Later when religious ceremonies increased in complexity and the literal sense of the hymns was becoming foreign to the people, it became necessary to provide a certain amount of popular education. But this did not proceed on a regimented, nationalistic basis. Learned Brahmins sometimes retired to the forests for the study of religious subjects and to teach those who joined them

<sup>11</sup>Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 87.



for a time; and travelling scholars made pilgrimages from teacher to teacher. There were also established by some of the kings higher schools for the study of religion and related subjects.<sup>25</sup> But such education as was offered was not intended for the masses, including all social classes, though many of these schools, at least in later times, were expanded by the use of older students in teaching the younger. This cheap system of conducting a school was known as the "monitorial system," and was later introduced into England by Andrew Bell.<sup>26</sup>

As shown elsewhere, Indian education, especially for the past two centuries, has been the work of Christian missionaries, various reform movements supported by "samajes," and public-spirited men and women, both native and foreign; but Government also, in one way or another, has had a part in the enterprise. Though, during the early days of the East India Company the promotion of education was not recognized as a function of that company, later this company was required to donate large sums toward providing popular education. In yet more recent decades, the educational historian will note that Government in many of the more progressive Indian states and British India has made important strides toward expanding public education. Backed by such progressive organizations as the All-India Women's Conference, we may look forward with confidence to a much more active participation of Government in educational affairs in the near future. Yet it must be recognized that in spite of all that has been done for popular education by Government and other agencies, formal schooling to a large degree, has not reached the masses.<sup>27</sup>

**A Word of Caution to the Critics.** In this connection it might be well to sound a note of caution to the critics of Indian education. In the first place, it is well to remember that a popular system of elementary schools, open to all classes and supported by the government, is a matter of relatively recent history, even in western countries.

In the second place, the reformer, eager to improve the educational status of the masses, may easily overlook the valuable non-literary types of education possessed in some measure by the masses, thereby ignoring the fact that education and literacy are not syn-

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-48. Material on early Indian history is scant because historical sense is not a feature of Hinduism, such writings as the Mahabharata being considered as authentic history. After about 1000 A. D., and especially with the coming of the Moslems, a new historical element was added to Indian learning.

<sup>27</sup>For a brief review of the contributions of Ram Mohan Roy, David Hare, Drinkwater Bethune, Lord Macaulay, and others to Indian education, see the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, pp. 293-294; McKee, Wm. J., *Developing a Project Curriculum for the Village Schools of India*, p. 26, University of North Carolina Press, 1930; and other available works on Indian education.

onymous in meaning or in value. Such reformers, with an eye fixed on many of the fine cultural heritages of India's past, and the findings of modern sciences as offered by western contemporaries, should be led to realize that much time and patience will be required to build an adequate modern Indian educational system out of these two basic materials. The process, evidently, is one of fusion, and may well be measured by the timeless hours of Brahma's ageless clock. There is plenty of time for so important a task.

In the third place, there is a clash in the philosophies of education between the traditional Indian ideals and the ideals of the imported system. A review of the famous Macaulay Minute will throw light on this situation. Up to the time of the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck, there had been a long-drawn-out controversy between a group which sought to extend oriental learning in India by means of the various native languages, and a group who urged the teaching of elementary knowledge in the vernacular tongues and of the higher branches in English. The latter ultimately won. In 1835 Lord Macaulay, an English statesman and scholar of wide reputation, and at that time Law Member of the Executive Council, proposed that English should be the medium of instruction in schools obtaining support under the East India Company Grant. This proposal was sanctioned by Lord Bentinck, and Sir Charles Wood's famous dispatch of 1854 determined the method and the machinery. The dispatch, among a number of significant provisions, prescribed the following measures: (1) The constitution in each presidency. . . of a separate department for the administration of education; (2) the establishment of universities in the presidency towns; (3) the provision of institutions for the training of teachers for all classes of schools; (4) the maintenance of existing Government colleges and high schools, and the increase of their number where necessary; (5) the increase of attention to vernacular schools; and (6) the introduction of a system of grants-in-aid.<sup>10</sup> From that date onward, education in India has meant a network of schools, colleges, and examinations ultimately controlled by Government. The grants-in-aid were a powerful force toward engrafting this new system on the existing Indian education, though, theoretically the schools were permitted freedom to develop along the lines of their own choice. So today Indian schools, especially from the high schools upward, are highly Anglicized both in educational philosophy and administrative procedure; and while the vernaculars are the languages used in the middle and elementary schools, English is the commonest medium of instruction in the high schools and colleges.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 296.



In the fourth place, a student of Indian education will need to understand the conditions which have given rise to the criticism that Indian education is top-heavy, i. e., pays relatively too much attention to higher education to the neglect of elementary education. The great degree of illiteracy, the small percentage of the childhood and youth enrolled in school, and the relatively small per capita expenditure on education in India seem to be evidence in support of this criticism. This criticism is voiced by Professor E. F. Oaten of Presidency College, Calcutta, in these words: "The State threw (by this minute) its weight on the side of a system which gave the middle classes funds for a particular type of schools which they desired for their vocational needs and which the State desired for its administrative needs, which have no roots whatever in Indian culture. All the efforts made since to correct the initial bias away from Indian culture, away from mass education, away from a reasonable primary educational system, in favor of a system which would base secondary education upon a sound primary education system integrated with Indian religion and culture, have never been able to restore the balance. The beginning was at the top, and Indian education in consequence grew into the top-heavy inverted pyramid which it still remains." This top-heaviness seemed to have been planned with the idea that the fruits of advanced education would eventually filter down to the masses and thereby bring quicker and more favorable results than if emphasis in funds and effort were placed on elementary education. That Indian higher education is not turning out the needed expert leadership may seem self-evident to a critical observer; but under the handicaps of a difficult climate, a multiplicity of languages, and other age-old hindrances found in custom and caste, it does not seem to the present writer that the mere shift of emphasis in the use of the same amount of money and other facilities to the advantage of the current elementary education, would necessarily result in much improvement over present conditions. Then, too, it does not seem that literacy, even if it could measurably be attained in terms of the numerous local languages and dialects, in view of the lack of a common *lingua franca*, could add greatly to a national culture or insure a strong national civic unity. Under the circumstances, the development of a common *lingua franca*, a resuscitation of Vedic culture and its integration with such contributions from other countries as India may choose to select, seem to be primarily the jobs for college-trained Indian scholars. It would then appear to be the counsel of wisdom to challenge these scholars to practical leadership

<sup>19</sup>Oaten, E. F., M. A., J. E. S., *Annals American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 1929, quoted by the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 212.

in the solution of their national problems, rather than dissipate such meagre higher educational facilities as they now enjoy. Fortunately, when India attains greater democracy in self-government, and has had time to look critically into her cultural past and into her present problems, she will probably evolve a national educational system that will be suitable for Indian educational needs as India herself may be led to see these needs.

### *Curricula Old and New*

**The Curricula of Earlier Times.** We shall, perhaps, get a clearer idea of the philosophy and the content of Indian education by describing her school curricula, old and new. In early Indian education, a relatively few chosen students had the privileges of formal schooling, and this was largely for religious leadership. Later there was also a sort of village day school to prepare upper caste youth for trade and literary pursuits."

As to the nature of the educational offerings in earlier times, it is of interest to note what was considered appropriate for the young women of the latter part of the Ancient Period of Indian History (2000 B. C. to 647 A.D.). According to Mazumder, it consisted of sixty-four arts, including: reading and elocution, versification, guessing unseen letters and objects held in the closed fist, solution of riddles and puzzles, mimicry, sewing, bed-making, ornamental cookery, the marking of one's face with sandal-wood paste, the display of jewelry on the person, perfumery, staining, dyeing and coloring the teeth, coiffure, drawing, making artificial flowers, jugglery, cock-fighting, ram-fighting, dice-playing, teaching parrots to talk, assuming various forms, jewel setting, decoration of houses, testing metals, gardening, music, etiquette, dancing, arts of warfare, etc." No doubt the education of boys and young men was equally practical for the lives they lived in those days, since the same authority lists a number of arts and accomplishments deemed desirable for men at the time of Buddha (576 B. C.). These included: leaping, running, riding, boxing, writing, arithmetic, grammar, poetry, Vedic glossary, lexicography, phonetics, metre, Yoga, logic, political economy, ethics, surgery, knowledge of the cries of birds and animals, guessing, divining others' thoughts, drama, music, song reciting, lac-ornamentation, basket-work, dyeing cloth, tinting jewels, hair-dressing, pantomime, masquerade, etc. etc."

In commenting upon the cultural values accruing to students

"McKee, former cit., p. 9.

"Mazumder former cit., pp. 116-20.

"Ibid., pp. 114, 115.



in the *ashrams* (places for contemplation and study) and village schools of ancient India, McKee lists the following on the positive side of the ledger:

1. Emphasis was placed upon self-activity.
2. A friendly and reverent attitude was inculcated toward nature.
3. Emphasis was placed upon cultural subjects such as religion, philosophy, folk tales, epic poems, racial traditions.
4. An intimate affectionate relationship was cultivated between pupil and teacher.
5. Abundant time was allowed for meditation upon the problems of life and the universe.
6. A strong religious motive pervaded all the life and thought of the school.
7. A spirit of considerable mental freedom was cultivated and the absence of rigid organization and fixed programs was sought so that the pupil's acquiring of knowledge depended to an appreciable extent upon his own eagerness for it.
8. Emphasis was placed upon the formation of desired attitudes and ideals, and the development of character.
9. A high conception of the dignity of manual labor and of its compatibility with intellectual pursuits was developed.
10. A belief in a strict self-discipline as an aid in the building of character was instilled."

On the negative side of the ledger, the same author lists the following weaknesses of the ancient Hindu ashrams (and schools):

1. The development of leaders was made from a highly selected group to be guardians of the existing social order, rather than progressives and reformers.
2. There was a lack of any criticism of social and economic life and current morality.
3. Emphasis was placed upon the ascetic ideal and individual development rather than upon the social growth and progress.
4. There was a stressing of passive and negative virtues, rather than the socially dynamic ones.

<sup>11</sup>McKee, Wm. J., *former cit.*, pp. 13, 14.

5. The curriculum was narrow and local.
6. There was a failure to motivate manual labor toward educational ends.
7. There was the absence of sports and games, and the consequent loss in physical and social development.
8. There was the discouragement of healthy, intellectual inquiry, honest doubt, and constructive criticism.
9. There was undue dominance of the *guru* (religious teacher) resulting from the fact that memorizing was the chief method employed in education.
10. There was a lack of educational opportunity for the masses."

In many, perhaps most, Indian village schools of today these criticisms, in varying degrees of intensity, yet hold. Perhaps the greatest barrier to the development of a revitalized and democratic school system in Indian villages is the inertia of the people themselves. They need to break the shackles of *status quo*, they need to regain a grasp of the beauty of Vedic culture and to fuse with it the spirit and the findings of modern science, and they need to gain a higher regard for the importance and the dignity of human life here and now. The attainment of such needed changes in attitude of the people should be a clear objective of Indian education.

The educational historian has noted that the favorable attitude in which the schools of the ancient period of Indian history were held, waned. As previously stated, the Medieval Period saw the elevation of architecture under the Mogul Kings to the neglect of literature; and during this period was ushered in idol worship, the seclusion of women, the caste system, and other changes that set Hindu society somewhat apart from the rest of the world even down to the present time. After the end of the reign of the Mogul King Aurangzeb (1707 A. D.), and the attendant anarchy and misery following it, education passed into rapid decay. It lost touch with village life, and the curricula became mechanical and formal, emphasizing religious subjects and classical writings, both in language and content, far beyond the interest of the people."

**The Curricula of Later Times.** As previously noted in this chapter, the Modern Period (Middle 18th Century to the present) is marked by the educational efforts of Christian missions and a growing interest on the part of Government in the development of

"Ibid., p. 14.

"Ibid., p. 11.



educational advantages and a keen appreciation of ancient Hindu civilization.

Now the reader would like to know what modern Indian schools teach. In answer to this question we present the Outline of the Course of Study of the Punjab Elementary Schools, as given in the Code for 1915.

## OUTLINE OF THE COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE PUNJAB ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

(Punjab Educational Code, 9th Edition, Oct. 1915.)

### Primary School

(Four Classes)<sup>34</sup>

	Periods of 22½ Min.	Hours
<b>Class I.</b>		
Vernacular (Urdu, Punjabi, or Hindi) .....	24	9
Reading the primer and writing characters and words.		
Arithmetic .....	12	4½
Notation up to 100		
Multiplication tables up to 10x10		
Simple exercises in adding and subtracting up to 10, using concrete objects.		
Nature Lessons or Manual Occupations .....	6	2½
Cow, goat, crow, fish, wheat, barley, grain or rice, maize or bajra, and four subjects to be selected.		
Simple Drill or Organized Games .....	6	2½
Recess .....	6	2½
Total per week .....	54	20½
<b>Class II.</b>		
Vernacular (Urdu, Punjabi, or Hindi) .....	30	11½
Reading the first and second rural readers.		
Writing of words and sentences.		
Arithmetic .....	12	4½
Notation up to 100,000		
Addition and subtraction		
Multiplication tables up to 16x16		
Multiplication and division up to 16		
Ideas of $\frac{1}{2}$ , $\frac{1}{4}$ , $1\frac{1}{2}$ , $1\frac{1}{4}$ (concrete).		
Geography .....	3	1
Distances and direction with special reference to the school premises, Cardinal points, course of the sun, plan of school and playground.		
Nature Lessons or Manual Occupations .....	6	2½
Horse, ass, buffalo, hen, onion, rape-seed, carrot, radish, and four others.		
Simple Drill or Organized Games .....	6	2½
Recess .....	6	2½
Total per week .....	63	23½
<b>Class III.</b>		
Vernacular (Urdu, Punjabi, or Hindi) .....	30	11½
Reading of third and fourth readers.		
Writing.		

<sup>34</sup>McKen, op. cit., pp. 81-88.

# INDIAN SCHOOLS

87

	Periods of 22½ Min.	Hours
Arithmetic .....	12	4½
Long division and multiplication.		
Fractional tables ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 20).		
Indian money tables.		
Reduction of money.		
Compound addition and subtraction of money.		
Geography .....	3	1
Geographical terms.		
Meaning and use of a map (map reading).		
Maps of village and district.		
Nature Lessons or Manual Occupations .....	6	2½
Cat, rabbit, frog, squirrel, snake, rose, mango, quail, hemp or flax, orange, and five others.		
Simple Drill or Organized Games .....	6	2½
Recess .....	6	2½
Total per week .....	63	23½

## Class IV

Vernacular (Urdu, Punjabi, or Hindi) .....	30	11½
Reading of fifth and sixth readers.		
Writing.		
Grammar (the sentence and its parts of speech).		
Arithmetic .....	16	6
Compound multiplication and division of money.		
Measures of length, weight, time.		
Reduction factors and prime numbers.		
Easy L.C.M. and H.C.M.		
Vulgar fractions (excluding complex and continued).		
Fractional tables ( $\frac{1}{2}$ , $2\frac{1}{2}$ , $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 20).		
Mahajani (traders' figures).		
Bank interest by native methods.		
Mensuration .....	4	1½
Square, rectangular, quadmi pamaish (pacing).		
Geography .....	4	1½
The Punjab, to be taught from a map		
Nature Lessons, Drawing or Handwork .....	6	2½
Physical characteristics of animals, a comparative study.		
Parts of plants and flowers.		
Comparison of vegetables, flowers, and grains.		
Simple Drill or Organized Games .....	6	2½
Recess .....	6	2½
Total per week .....	72	27

## Lower Middle School (Classes V and VI)

	45-Minute periods per Week	
	For Those Taking English	For Those Not Taking English
Vernacular .....	8	8
Mathematics .....	6	6
Science and Geography .....	5	5
History .....	2	2
Drawing .....	2	2
Agriculture or Manual Training or a second language.....	4	6
(Classical Persian or Vernacular)		
English .....	12	—
Advanced course of vernacular .....	—	6
Rural sanitation .....	—	4
Total per week .....	39	39



It is obvious that the children of the elementary schools of the Punjab pursue studies very similar in principle, if not frequently in content, to those pursued by children in the schools of the West. A similar examination of secondary school and college curricula, with certain adjustments to Indian conditions, would probably result in comparable findings. However, in contrast with their ancient schools, these modern public schools do not teach any formal courses in religion, it being the policy of Government to hold itself aloof from those religious conflicts that have been so frequent in Indian history. Government is even requiring the so-called "conscience clause" in its grants to mission schools that teach religion.

While the content of public school offerings, as shown in the Punjab outline, may seem quite adequate, many critics of Indian schools find fault in the methodology of teaching and learning. Most of these critics consider the formal governmental inspection too mechanical and too inconsiderate of the actual educational needs of the locality; and they have also very little favorable to say about the examination system which seems to encourage the memorizing of minor factual material often not understood by the students and rarely applicable or applied to the problems that so sorely beset present-day village India. Writing in this vein McKee says: "In some of the backward schools, pupils sit on the floor to study and sway back and forth to the rhythm of a sing-song drone as they memorize paragraph after paragraph of prescribed subject matter. When books are scarce a pupil monitor is put in charge. He points to letters or words, multiplication facts or simple problems, and at the same time sings out their names in a droning wail, after which the class repeats in unison what he has said . . . A careful evaluation of existing methods reveals their tendency to deaden and paralyze school life and education because of their emphasis upon routine and rigidity, their indoctrination regarding subject matter, their unreality with reference to life and child nature, their uniformity of product, their repression of personality and their externality with reference to results."<sup>77</sup>

While there is, no doubt, much validity in most of the adverse criticism of modern Indian elementary schools, particularly in the villages, it might be well to note some of the major handicaps these schools face. Dr. Olcott, a first-hand student of Indian schools, lists the following as difficulties affecting attendance on the part of the children of the masses:

1. The grinding poverty of the masses makes them unwilling to relinquish the services of their children.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 75, 76. See criticism in former section.

2. The villagers' conservatism prejudices them against innovations, and makes them indifferent to schooling, the utility of which they question, often with good cause.
3. The upper classes and castes in the villages are often not only indifferent to the education of these less fortunate villagers, but are actively opposed to it since it is likely to interfere with the unquestioned obedience and service that has been offered by the lowest castes through the ages.
4. The debilitating effects of such diseases as malaria and hookworm, poor health, and the ravages of epidemics, reduce the school enrollment and the percentage of attendance.
5. The hamlets and villages in which people live are often so isolated from each other as to render attendance difficult during the hottest months and the monsoons if the schools are located outside the villages where the children live.
6. Until recent years, government officials have been slow to provide and plan effectively for elementary education and to consider equality of opportunity for all . . .
7. The resources that have been directed to elementary education have been insufficient for its proper development."

When we add to these difficulties the fact that village schools are often held under trees or open sheds where passersby can stand about and distract the attention of the students, and that scarcely any village teachers have had over nine years of schooling, and many far less," we can readily see that Indian public school education, judged by western standards, has far to go before adequate educational opportunity can be offered to the childhood and youth of the masses.

In closing this chapter, we wish again to caution the reader, and also many enthusiastic Indian reformers, against an overemphasis on literacy *per se*, and an undervaluation of India's own cultural heritage and the genius of her people, even though they are so largely illiterate. We should not be led to think that what India needs is western civilization, unalloyed with Indian culture. In this respect all Indian educational critics, both native and foreign, need to put on the robe of thoughtfulness and humility. Careful thinkers hold that the West has contributed very little to In-

<sup>11</sup>Olcott, *former ed.*, pp. 93, 94.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 125.



dian culture that has leavened her material advancement. After acknowledging India's indebtedness to western education for material and political progress, Mayhew continues: "We have hardly begun to teach her how to live happily by the fullest and finest of her cultural genius and traditions and by their adaptation to the service of the world."<sup>40</sup> The most cogent and pivotal question that one can raise at this point is, in terms of the entire socio-physical matrix in which the masses live and will probably continue to live, and in terms of tested age-old practices: What sort of education do the masses need? We of the West are too apt to see the question of Indian education in terms of western theories and practices, and western culture, rather than in terms of Indian cultural and physical background and *felt* needs. Ultimately India's own scholars and thinkers will evolve the best answer to this question.

<sup>40</sup>Mayhew, *former* cit., p. 74.

## Chapter VI

### THE INDIAN VILLAGE

#### *Introduction*

**The General Situation.** At different places in this book we have referred to the functions of the village in the life of India, and have reported on both the number of villages and their agricultural nature.<sup>1</sup> It is our purpose in this chapter to describe in a little greater detail this important social unit that reaches back to the dawn of recorded Indian history and that has persisted with unabated influence upon the social, the economic, the political and the cultural life of the country.

These villages, physically, are usually mere clusters of tiny mud huts which create but a small indentation on their background of plains, forests, or mountains. Many of them are so inconspicuous as to be easily overlooked altogether by people fairly well acquainted with a locality. Sometimes, especially in the southwestern part of India, these villages are composed of only a few families living somewhat separated on their several small plots of land; sometimes the villages are larger, having a greater concentration of wealth and more social service agencies; but generally the people of rural areas live in consolidated residential groupings on land utilized for residential, subsistence, and social purposes. It is estimated that the average village contains about four hundred inhabitants.

These villages, for the most part in the interior of the country, are isolated from the outside world. Despite the great improvements in communication and transportation which have taken place in recent years, only a small portion of these villages have either railways or improved highways within several miles of them, and the rest must be reached by rough cart-tracks or winding path-

<sup>1</sup>See the chapter on the Caste System; also the chapters on Agriculture. As background material to a sound understanding of the Indian village, these additional references are given: Haden-Powell, H. H., *The Indian Village Community*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1896; Maine, Sir Henry Sumner, *Village-Communities of the East and West*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1876; Mokerjee, Radhakamal, *Democracies of the East*, P. S. King & Son, Ltd., Westminster, 1923; Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I, Survey, His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1930.



ways between fields or through the jungle, over which bullock-carts or other primitive means of travel may go during the season when the floods permit travel. As described elsewhere, postal and telegraphic communication to these remote villages is highly limited and the literacy of the villagers is negligible, so that the vast majority of India's village population is highly isolated culturally. As a result, the people are ignorant and socially retarded. The economic support of villages is of the self-sufficing sort, consisting of a combination of agriculture and hand industries in the case of certain individuals, and in the case of others, of caste-limited trades or occupations. This simple life of the village is interrupted when occasionally wandering men and peddlers pass through bringing stories of the outer world, or merchandise for sale, and when goods are exchanged by barter at the bazaar and the open-air shandy. But for many villagers, a journey to even the nearest town is regarded as a serious adventure to be undertaken only after much thought and preparation.<sup>3</sup> Thus the typical Indian village community is not only self-contained to a very large degree, but over centuries of time has tended to keep up the same intricate social organization composed of landholders, tenants, agricultural laborers, artisans of many kinds, priests, beggars, money-lenders, and others, each with his clearly defined functions hallowed by tradition.

**The Origin of the Village.** Indian villages, as perhaps villages elsewhere throughout the world, have had many sources of origin. Authorities differ somewhat upon this matter, but it seems probable that these villages, historically and culturally, had a composite origin including the desire of people for mutual protection against outside enemies; a desire of people of the same kinship and similar cultures to live together; and the teaching of experience through many kinds of undertakings which has led individuals and clans to employ mutual aid in solving the problems of life.<sup>4</sup> One well acquainted with the influence of geographical factors as determinants of men's place of abode and means of livelihood may note how the torrid climate, the devastating floods of the monsoon, the need for irrigation in semi-desert areas, isolation from large streams and the seashore, etc. have tended to retard social progress in much of India.<sup>5</sup> And as in the case of the Mormon settlement of Utah in America, settlements in the newly irrigated areas of the Punjab in India have tended toward the village type of abode. Numerous

<sup>3</sup>India in 1920-31, p. 156. See also Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I, ch. 2, *The Countryside and the Towns*.

<sup>4</sup>See Kropotkin, P. A., *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, N. Y., 1904.

<sup>5</sup>See Chapter II.



FIG. VIII. FACTORS THAT TEND TO REDUCE CASTE DISTINCTION. 1. An Indian railway station. Here castes of high and low degree intermingle; 2. Teacher training students at Allahabad Agricultural Institute working in the garden. The hostel is in the background. This procedure tends to upset old caste attitudes toward labor and food tabu.





invasions by outside conquering hordes have tended to cause the conquered to withdraw unto themselves, thus giving rise, perhaps, to both the village mode of life and the caste system. But whatever the reason for their original mode of dwelling, history bears evidence to the fact that the experience of the peoples who make up present-day India proved it advisable to live in village groups, as opposed to the isolation of families upon separate sizable holdings of land which has been largely characteristic of American rural life.

### *Physical Aspects of the Village*

**The General Appearance of the Village.** Even in a country as ancient and conservative as India, there is considerable variety in social customs and in the methods employed in performing the tasks of life. There is also considerable variety in house and village construction, though it is probable that it is the similarities that will appeal most strongly to the person who has travelled extensively throughout this country.

The typical Indian village is an agricultural village employing a combination of semi-pastoral agriculture, communal living, and caste relationships, which we shall describe at greater length in the next chapter. The traveller to a village of this sort, if out early in the morning, may see the cows, sheep, goats, and perhaps other livestock gathered from the various family residential units to be herded for the day on the waste lands on the remote outskirts of the village. Scarcity of fencing materials, the fragmentation of individual holdings of land, the communal use of much of the land, age-old customs of herding, etc. all have worked toward the practical non-existence of fences throughout India, except the folds for the keeping of livestock during the night; even then, as we show elsewhere, the dwellings of the villagers pretty generally serve the latter purpose. On the immediate outskirts of the village the crops are grown, with once in a while a few papaya, plantain (banana) or other fruit plants growing within the village, or even within courtyards of individual housing units, and over the roofs of the village buildings often may be seen growing gourds and other climbing plants.

Varying somewhat with the section of country, the village proper, containing the dwellings and the shelters for the livestock, is usually surrounded by a wall; so, too, are the several family residential units within the village. In case it is a caste village, as is customary, the outcastes may live in a smaller subsidiary walled-in village somewhat removed from the main village. The village walls are usually made of mud; but sometimes cactus, aloes, or



other hardy hedge plants may supplement, or even replace, the mud wall. Sometimes the walls of wealthier villages, and those surrounding the wealthier residences in the villages and cities, are entered by an ornate gateway, on either side of which may be granite columns artistically constructed by the village stone masons.

An inside view of the village shows continuous rows of little houses, or walled-in courtyards on either side of narrow streets. Unless a public highway passes through the village, the streets are usually so narrow and have so many sharp turns as to make even the passing of bullock carts difficult. Even if a highway passes through the village, the erection of sacred stone in the center of the road, or the jutting out of a village shrine, or the tumultuous filling of the highway by livestock, may make the passage of an automobile very difficult, and in many cases impossible.

Within the courtyards are found the living quarters of both the families and their livestock, and an open space for all kinds of work, including the *chulha* or oven built for out-door cooking. In the smaller villages all the houses may be in solid rows, facing the highway or street; or, in other cases, in solid rows facing a large central space with courtyard behind the houses. In the latter case, cattle may be kept in a shed attached to the front of the house, or in an adjoining building, or in the courtyard behind.<sup>1</sup>

**Village Homes.** In order to be a little more descriptive and concrete in our picture of the family unit dwelling, let us quote Dr. Wiser's description of an average, "ordinary" house in the village of Karimpur in North India:

"This house built of mud has one outside door facing east, and this opens into the cattle room which serves as an entry to the house proper, which contains an open courtyard on which face two inner rooms. The cow room and these other two rooms form three sides to the open courtyard. Before the door a heavy slab of wood has been set in the earth to serve as a stepping stone to the door sill when rain floods the path. The door frame is *Nim* wood . . . and the heavy door does not fit close enough to prevent the passage of small animals.

"The cattle room is long and dark. At one end . . . is a low mud feeding trough built out from the wall; at the other end are piled high branches for fire wood, and beside them a stack of fodder. In the middle on a rope bed the master of the house lies ill with a fever. The packed mud floor is softened by urine where the family buffalo stood during the night.

<sup>1</sup>See the writer's description of Indian villages in the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Fact-Finders' Report, Vol. IV, pp. 85, 93-95; also the Regional Reports of this series, Vol. I, p. 2.

"Through this cattle room a door opens into the family court (yard) into which the other two living rooms open, and in which is located the kitchen and chulha . . . . The whole establishment is surrounded by a high earthen wall."\* A further account of Indian homes is given elsewhere in this volume, to which the reader's attention is directed.

### *Economic Aspects of Village Life*

**Occupancy of the Land.** Land in India, as in America and other countries, may be owned and controlled by individuals, corporations, and the state. "Government," the "Nizam," the "Ruling Prince," the "Crown," or some other title designating the state, may have possession of areas of unoccupied lands and may dispose of these lands for the purpose of colonization. Philanthropic individuals, such as Sir Daniel Hamilton at Gosaba, Christian missions such as the Irish Presbyterians in the Gujarat, and other agencies are promoting the colonization of lands, even today, and are thus endeavoring to transplant needy people, or in some cases criminal tribes, to the soil with the hope of helping them to support themselves by means of agricultural pursuits.<sup>1</sup> Private corporations own and control vast areas planted to tea, such as are found in the great tea areas of Ceylon, Assam, Burma, and certain Himalayan Mountain regions. Private corporations also own and control vast forest and timber areas, coal lands, and lands containing other natural resources. Thus the system of land tenure in India exhibits almost every conceivable variation from immense estates containing thousands of tenants, or commercial enterprises employing large numbers of laborers, to minute peasant holdings less than an acre in size. In this respect India is similar to other countries; but it is the land connected with the traditional Indian village in which we are most interested at present.

**a) Village Holdings.** A typical agricultural village, so far as land holding is concerned, may consist of one or a combination of two or more of the following methods: land held by private individuals, land held in commonage by the villagers, and land owned by a landlord (zamindar), corporation, or the State. While the ownership of the land on which the houses of the village rest, as well as the land immediately about the village devoted to crop growing or pasture, may come in whole or in part under one or more combinations of the above classification, custom, under cer-

\*Wiener, Wm. H., *The Social Institutions of a Hindu Village in North India*, a Doctor's thesis as yet in manuscript form, Cornell University, 1922.

<sup>1</sup>See the writer's account of land colonization, *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry Report*, Vol. IV, pp. 84-85.



rain conditions, grants the villagers a right to occupancy. Thus, under certain conditions of tenure for a given number of years, land owners cannot dispossess tenants against their will from the occupancy and the use of land for residential and agricultural purposes.<sup>1</sup> Some of the modern reformers, however, profess a belief in the desirability of altering law and custom so as to facilitate the dispossession of tenants in order that land holdings may be consolidated and otherwise made amenable to scientific management; but such reforms, even if ultimately desirable and obtainable, should come about slowly so as to permit suitable social adjustments and to provide a laboratory of experience by which the later phases of the experiment may be guided. Those who have a clear conception of the Indian philosophy of life and who understand the usefulness of the age-old practices tested by experience, will be very cautious about arguing for reforms in land holding which deviate radically from the customs and the rules of the past.

**b) Land Taxation.** We should not pass the discussion of the occupancy of land without presenting a brief discussion of its significance to the support of the expenses of government. For the purpose of taxation, land holdings may be divided into two fairly well-defined groups, the zamindari and the ryotwari; yet investigation might reveal the traces of other types of taxation. Without raising the question of social theory basic to each, we turn to a Government of India Report for the definition and the extent of the two major systems of taxation. "When the revenue is assessed by the State on an individual or community owning considerable landed property, and occupying a position analagous to that of a landlord, the tenure is known as *zamindari* or 'village community'; and when it is assessed on individuals who are the actual occupants, or are accepted as representing the occupants, of small holdings, the tenure is known as *ryotwari*. Under either system there may be rent-paying sub-tenants. Zamindari tenure may be either permanently settled, which means that the land-revenue has been fixed in perpetuity, or temporarily settled, in which case the revenue comes up for revision at certain specified periods. Village community and ryotwari tenures are, as a rule, temporarily settled, and the land revenue assessed on them is thus liable to change from time to time. In 1928-29 the total acreage of ryotwari holdings was 334,598,000, of permanently settled zamindari or village community holdings, 121,017,000, and of temporarily settled zamindari or village community holdings, 189,902,000. Thus 51 per cent of the total area was held by ryotwari proprietors,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-85; also Wiesner, Wm. H., Ibid., Appendix setting forth the *Fajid-ul-ara* (customs) governing Karimpur.

and 19 per cent was held by permanently settled and 30 per cent by temporarily settled zamindars.<sup>9</sup>

The zamindar is directly responsible to the government for the collection of tax within his zamindari, which in farming areas is usually "in kind," the agreement as to the amount of agricultural products to be turned over being made between the zamindar and his tenants. Thus it is a usual sight for the zamindar or his representative to appear at the threshing floor at harvest time to receive his share of the crop. From this share he passes on to the government a percentage, and thus the zamindar becomes a sort of government official as well as a landlord. In the case of the ryotwari, the ryots pay tax directly to government through its settlement officer or someone, however named, who is designated to receive the tax. Government possesses a most complete record of all lands, and regardless of how small the holdings, has each mapped and described as to soil-type, size, etc. For a more complete account of systems of taxation, tariffs, division of authority between the Central Government and the several states, etc., the reader is referred to such important reports as those made for the use of Parliament and other official bodies.<sup>10</sup>

**Rural Unemployment.** Rural unemployment is one of the most serious economic problems India faces. There are more men clinging to the land than are actually required to cultivate it, which results in making the agriculturists a needy and dependent group. An aspect of this condition is unemployment. The majority of cultivators and agricultural laborers have a great deal of spare time during which they have little or no opportunities, under present conditions, for employment. The cities, constituting but a tenth of the population, do not furnish a very large market for food products, and the facilities for producing for foreign markets, as well as the facilities for marketing, have not been sufficiently well developed to encourage the average villager to do more than take care of his own bare subsistence needs. The tendency toward seasonal idleness is especially characteristic of dry areas where there is but one important cropping season a year, and is strengthened by the semi-pastoral type of farming prevailing in much of India, and other age-old folkways of the people. This spare time varies from section to section, "But it may be assumed as a broad generalization that by far the greater number of cultivators have at least from two to four months absolute leisure in the year."<sup>11</sup> Very few people of the agricultural and laboring classes in western countries could

<sup>9</sup>India in 1930-31, pp. 169, 338.

<sup>10</sup>E. G., India in 1930-31; Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, 1928; Report of Imperial Council of Research, Delhi.

<sup>11</sup>Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, p. 10.



afford to be idle so long. Yet the average cultivator, even though unemployed in his vocation for much of the time, may not be altogether idle, for his leisure hours are taken up by countless rites which accompany birth, marriage, death, and by numerous festivals and fairs. As the result, long periods of vocational unemployment not only curtail the family's income, but increase expenses for social activities and encourage the dissipation of accumulated earnings through gambling and litigation.<sup>12</sup>

**Village Industries.** It is obvious that the welfare of Indian villages calls for less idleness on the part of the workers, toward the end that they may receive a more satisfactory income. The same may be said of many American farmers and other vocational workers. Among a number of suggestions that have been made for the reduction of idleness is the development of village industries. While certain primitive cottage industries, as aspects of caste-limited trades, or otherwise, have existed in Indian villages from early days down to the present, no very successful attempt has thus far been made among agriculturists to expand these industries as a form of cooperative enterprise or as the beginnings of a factory system. In recent years the *swadeshi* movement for the primary purpose of boycotting British goods for political ends, at least in the minds of certain leaders, had the aim of encouraging village industries; but it is estimated that not more than .03 per cent of the agriculturists of India are thus employed.<sup>13</sup> The government through the development of industrial and technical schools, the promotion of peripatetic instruction, and through research in textile fabrics and other phases of industrial arts, is endeavoring to develop village industries throughout the country so as to add to employment and income.<sup>14</sup> Some progress is claimed for such effort in the way of developing weaving and lacemaking, the making of furniture, the promotion of special commercialized agricultural enterprises, etc., but as yet the movement can not be thought of as having gone far beyond the experimental stage.

However, in much of the discussion taking place with regard to the part-time industrial employment of agriculturists, either in small local factories or in cottage industries, there is much wishful thinking that does not take into account suitably the principles of economics and sociology involved in the case.

<sup>12</sup>Darling, M. L., *The Punjab Peasant*, pp. 72-73, quoting Calvert's report upon litigation in the Punjab. See also *The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 75.

<sup>13</sup>*Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 75. For a more complete statement of numbers employed in the trades, mines, industries, etc., see same reference, pp. 112-123.

<sup>14</sup>*India in 1930-31*, pp. 611-12.

As previously stated, but a relatively small portion of India's population is urban, so that beyond village consumption, there is not a great demand within the country for many of her farm products. Moreover, Indian farm products, either in raw or in manufactured form, or Indian manufactured non-agricultural products produced by part-time farmers, if they successfully find export markets, must in many cases compete both in price and quality with goods made by improved technological processes in other countries. This calls for a technology of manufacturing, merchandizing, and business organization, and for a desire for economic profit, which on the whole, has not heretofore been as characteristic of Indian business enterprises as of other countries with which she would have to compete. Unless she should adopt these aspects of modern business, it is likely that the expansion of village industries on any basis would probably not get far beyond local self-subsistence needs. In fact many seriously question whether it would be possible to develop Indian village industries on a large-scale profit-making basis. But besides these difficulties there are the limitations to employment interposed by the caste system, and the limitations to economic demands imposed by the simple life of the village, a warm climate, and age-old custom.

**Economic Relations of the City and the Village.** While it must be recognized that a combination of farming and non-farm industries by the same individuals in the villages of India has not gone far, and for the most part such as is practiced is almost wholly on the subsistence level, there is an industrial development that is important. In fact the International Labor Office at Geneva recognizes India as one of the eight most important industrial nations in the world.<sup>15</sup> While, according to the 1921 Census, over 19 million people were engaged in industry, transportation and mining, the vast majority of these were engaged in the ancient caste-regulated handicraft industries of the villages. The total numbers employed in factories was only a little more than a million and a half; about 800,000 were engaged in railway transportation, apart from railway repair and construction work; and around 200,000 were employed in the mines. But these represent only about 1.5 per cent of the entire population.<sup>16</sup> Thus the modern factory system, so far as the relative number of employees is concerned, occupies but a small place in the economy of the nation as a whole.

<sup>15</sup>Cressy, Paul F., *The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 114.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*



a) **Social Problems of Industrialization.** The first railways and factories were established in India nearly three-quarters of a century ago. Since that date their growth has been steady, but by no means spectacular. There are, however, several urban centers where commercialized industry is concentrated, and in connection with this movement there have arisen two major conditions that we should mention in passing.

The first of these conditions is the adverse effect of commercialized industry upon the villages in the immediate hinterland of these cities. The machine-made articles, especially cloth, have been able to compete successfully with goods made by the village handicraft methods. Thus, the villagers, if they can raise the necessary funds, exhibit a growing desire for cloth made in the urban mills; and if swarajist pressure is not too great, they are not inclined to quibble too much as to whether the cloth was made in Tokyo, Lancashire, or in some of their own cities such as Nagpur, Sholapur, or Bombay. But the patronage of such commercial industries is resulting in the dislocation and decay of many village handicraft trades; and since the modern factory system is not developing fast enough to absorb those thus thrown out of employment, there is a decreasing number of persons supported by trades and industries and an increasing number forced back upon agriculture as a means of livelihood. This increased pressure upon the land, apparently, is resulting in increasing the poverty of India.<sup>17</sup>

There has grown out of this labor situation an additional problem to village social solidarity, and that is the seasonal migration of village men to the cities. When these village men go to the city, they come into contact with the life and the ways of the city, and upon their return to their native villages relate what they have seen and experienced, and thus, to a degree, push back the intellectual horizons of their fellow villagers. However, their absence from their families, if long extended or oft-repeated, tends to weaken family ties and to break down their caste relationships in their own villages. Thus often in times of reverses, the city migrant finds himself outside the pale of cooperative support furnished by the family clan and the caste system in his native village. Because of this fact these migrants are loath to give up entirely the connections with their home villages. The continued or repeated absences of village men in the cities also upset the sex ratio of the population, both in the cities and the villages, which, according to the views of some observers, tends to break

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 118; see other sections of the same reference.

down the solidarity of the home and otherwise contributes toward sex laxity.

The extent of the cityward movement of village labor is not fully known, but from certain scattered data obtainable, it is supposed to be fairly great in some localities. This is broadly indicated by the following table which shows the sex ratios in some of the leading industrial and commercial centers in the years 1921 and 1931.<sup>18</sup> But if the ratio is computed on the age

#### SEX RATIO OF THE POPULATION OF CERTAIN CITIES OF INDIA, 1921 AND 1931

Cities	Number of Females per 1000 Males	
	Year 1921	Year 1931
Calcutta and suburbs .....	500	475
Bombay .....	524	553
Madras .....	908	896
Rangoon .....	444	478
Lahore .....	571	—
Ahmedabad .....	763	—
Karachi .....	629	697
Cawnpore .....	667	698
Nagpur .....	864	852
Madura .....	976	—
Sholapur .....	894	880

groups from twenty to forty-five, a greater disparity is observed. For example, in Bombay in 1921 there were of this age-description only 420 women for each 1000 men, and since practically every Indian man of this age may be assumed to be married, these figures indicate something of the broken family life which exists in that city.<sup>19</sup>

To view these migrations from the city's standpoint, there emerge other problems of interest. Some of these have already been alluded to. For example, if the migrating villagers have a new insight into the world outside their villages, it is the city that has given both the impulse and the means for satisfying their curiosity about the outside world; if sex looseness results from temporarily broken homes, the underworld of the city has its contributing share in this condition; and if the migrating villagers do not sever too completely their connections with their ancestral villages, they can return to them when unemployment or other disaster overtakes them in the city, thus relieving the city of the expense of doling out charity to them; or, on the other hand, if the villagers have completely severed their residential relations

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 138, quoting data from the Statistical Abstracts for British India, 1927-28; and the Report of the Royal Commission on Labor in India, 1931.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 140.



with their ancestral villages, unemployment or other disaster may make them objects of charity upon their adopted city.

But the city receives a vast portion of its permanent population as migrants from outside its limits. The following table presents illuminating data on this point.<sup>20</sup> Some of this cityward

THE PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BORN OUTSIDE  
CERTAIN LARGE CITIES, 1921.

Cities	Per cent
Calcutta and suburbs	62.9
Bombay	84.0
Madras	33.3
Rangoon	67.7
Lahore	44.0
Ahmedabad	39.7
Karachi	60.5
Cawnpore	42.5
Nagpur	25.8
Madura	17.8
Sholapur	39.1

migrating population, no doubt, came from the villages, but it is assumed by students of Indian population movements that most of it, perhaps, came directly from smaller cities. The proportion coming from each source is somewhat a moot question; but that the cities depend heavily upon smaller centers for such comparatively small growth in population as they enjoy, cannot be doubted.

There are yet other aspects of this cityward migration that need to be mentioned, such as the high death-rates and the slum conditions of living to which the migrants are subjected. Urban death-rates are uniformly higher than those for the provinces as a whole in which they are located. How high this urban death-rate is, is shown, for example, by the infant mortality rate in Bombay in 1921. Out of every 1000 children born alive that year in this city, 672 did not live a year; while for families living in one-room tenements, the death-rate reached the terrible ratio of 829 deaths per 1000 births.<sup>21</sup> That the slum conditions under which much of the city population lives is responsible for high mortality rates may be presumed from the example of Bombay. In 1921, 66 per cent of that city's population lived in one-room tenements; a third of the total population of the city lived in single rooms occupied by six or more persons; while 32,000 were reported to be living in rooms housing twenty persons or more

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 140, quoting data from the Statistical Abstracts for British India, 1927-28.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

each. In Ahmedabad in 1921, 52 per cent of the people were living in one-room tenements, while in five wards of the city 90 per cent or more of the people were crowded into one-room homes,<sup>22</sup> a striking example of how little industries which created the modern cities actually provide for the population. It is true that the better residential sections of these great cities are provided with the sanitary equipment usual in similar large cities of the West, but the slum parts of these cities, like most of the villages, do not have modern sanitary equipment, so that, because of these lacks, crowding of residence necessarily increases health hazards. The government is conscious of these conditions, and aided by philanthropic individuals, Christian missions, and other agencies, is trying to ameliorate them. Health improvement societies are being organized, corporations for the erection of better living quarters are being chartered, and other movements are working toward providing industrial employees more sightly and more sanitary places in which to live.

**Village Labor Systems.** In subsequent chapters we shall give the reader some insight into Indian farm labor by showing women's relation thereto, the rate of wages paid, the methods of performing farm work, the relative efficiency of labor, etc. We shall now briefly describe two systems of labor employment which reveal the functional relationships existing between the employer and employed, and the social status of the employees as well.

a) **The Kamai System.** One of these is the *Kamai* System. So far as the writer knows, this system has not been thoroughly studied as to its extent and forms, and as to its social and economic results. However, Dr. Warren H. Wilson, in his recent researches in India, came upon it frequently enough for graphic description, and reported it common in Bihar, Orissa, and widely scattered elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> According to Dr. Wilson, the *Kamai* System is based on a form of agreement by which a borrower mortgages his liberty to the lender of money and agrees to work without cash remuneration until the debt is paid. Sometimes the amount of money borrowed may be a sum as small as 30 or 40 rupees, but interest rates, sometimes as high as 75 per cent and often compounded, combined with rascality on the part of the lender and ignorance on the part of the borrower, often make this system little more than a system of slavery. Worst of all, according to custom in most sections, the debt, if not paid, is inherited by the *kamai's* sons, so that the rising generations are held in a bondage not of their own making.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>23</sup>Wilson, Warren H., *The Family and Village in India*. Yearbook of the American Sociological Society, Nov. 1931, Vol. XXV, No. 4.



In order to present this system a little more clearly, we quote at length from Dr. Wilson's description. He writes: "The Kamai is usually given a house, rent free, or the materials with which to build, and about a sixth of an acre of upland which he may plow for his own use. Seed is supplied, and he has the use of his master's bullocks and implements. Possibly he may also receive a small plot of paddy (rice) land. On days which he will be required to work, he will receive a *kachcha seer* (scant small measure) of common grain, or as much as  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seers, according to the custom of the locality. This dole is augmented at certain times by lesser rewards given to his dependents for part-time jobs. At harvest time he may receive one out of 16 or 20 bundles of grain he reaps. . . While some [kamais] are only called to work at the ploughing season, many work perhaps two out of three days on an average; others again are more or less whole-time handymen, and day and night at their master's beck and call."<sup>24</sup> The Kamai System, and the Jajmani System, whose description follows, are termed by Dr. Wilson, "escapes from economic determinism;" but in another sense they may be considered patterns of socio-economic adjustment.

b) **The Jajmani System.** Another important system of labor widely extant in India is the *Jajmani* System. Fortunately, we have at hand the report of a recent intensive case-study of this system by Dr. William H. Wiser, as it functions today in the village of Karimpur in North India.<sup>25</sup> According to Dr. Wiser, the Jajmani System is essentially a service relationship among the castes and other social elements making up the village population, wherein each caste or social element is expected, at some time during the year, to render a fixed type of service to some or all of the other groups. Thus each social group,—by this we usually mean caste, serves the other, and thus becomes a *kam-karnewala* (one who serves); in turn each becomes master, or *jajman* (one who is served). In return for the various services, there are set by custom or agreement payments in cash or in kind, made daily, monthly, bi-monthly, yearly, etc., depending on the type of service rendered, and in part on the good will of the *jajman*.<sup>26</sup>

To illustrate the *jajmani-kam-karnewala* relationship a little more clearly, we quote again from Dr. Wiser as follows: "The carpenter during the sowing season must remove and sharpen the plow points once or twice a week. During the harvest he must keep the sickles sharp and renew handles as often as demanded.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>25</sup>Wiser, William H., *The Hindu Jajmani System*, former cit.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



FIG. IX. A HESIO WEDDING PARTY, THE TUBBO MOUNING AFTER THE WEDDING CEREMONY. Note the groom asleep in the lap of the man at the left; note also the white ash hand prints on the wall for the purpose of warding off the evil eye. Weddings and the succession of ceremonies usually connected therewith are an important source of expense and debt.





He must be ready to repair a cart whenever called upon by a customer, or to make minor repairs on the customer's house. In exchange he receives at each harvest twenty-eight pounds of grain for every plow owned by his client. . . . This service relationship is established not only between carpenters and other residents of the village, but affects all castes."<sup>27</sup> Thus the leatherworker, the mat maker, the washerman, the oil presser, the cotton carder, the gardener, the water bearer, the shepherd, the tailor, the barber, the priest, the bard, each working within the limits of his own vocation as determined by caste and custom, performs the functions of his vocation for the benefit of all the other castes, with certain exceptions, depending upon caste rules governing specific cases of service. Even "kam-karnevalas who have no special rights, if in need of food, can come, *hath jhorke*, and be certain of receiving some grain . . . by gleaning in the field or at the threshing floor. In the subconscious mind of the good Hindu there is always the thought, 'a giver of grain (receives) eternal life' (Laws of Manu IV: 232)."<sup>28</sup>

Thus this ancient system recognizes the claims of the different occupational groups to a share of the earnings of the village as a whole, provides a practical means of economic security, recognizes a common responsibility, even if the various castes are not socially equal, and provides for the support of delinquents and defectives. It is true that these relationships are not symmetrical, i. e., do not bear democratically upon all castes in equal manner and degree; it is true that the services demanded of very low castes and out-castes are, according to western standards, menial and degrading; it is true that this relationship works towards extreme conservatism; and it is further true that within this system there is a serious lack of self-determination; but in a country beset by so many difficulties as are the villages of India, the Jajmani System, and the Kamai System previously described, have many virtues. It even seems probable that western countries characterized by an extreme individualism might study with profit the socio-economic organization of Indian villages, especially as illustrated by the jajmani system. Surely its recognition of group allegiance and group solidarity, and its provisions for peace, security, and contentment, should have a challenging meaning for the outside world.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 6. However, the priest and other high caste jajmans, are usually designated by their socio-vocational names, such as "priest," "pundit," "poet," etc.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 160. See also appropriate sections of the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I.



*Social Aspects of Village Life*

After examining certain of the physical and economic aspects of Indian villages, we need to turn the spotlight upon their social aspects as well. After all, it is the people in their social practices and relationships that interest us most. However, we need to reflect that in discussing the physical and the economic phases of village life as presented in the other chapters of this book, we have also, at least by indirection, discussed the social and the cultural phases as well; for under Hindu philosophy there is a logical integration of all phases of life. Thus, the division of our treatment of these topics is based more on convenience than logic. We shall then view the social aspects under the following headings: village health, village recreation, village education, the caste system, the family, and social factors influencing agriculture. Some of these are so important as to call for a separate chapter each.

**Village Health.** Neill, a close student of Indian affairs, states that the greatest hindrances to the social welfare of this country are disease, drink, and debt, all of which may be largely overcome by the villagers themselves if they will. As to the extent of illness, he estimates that a third of the population is suffering ill-health, in varying degrees, all the time.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Dr. Macnicol, formerly, for a number of years, Secretary of the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon, quoting from the Report of the British Health Department, estimates that 1,000,000 deaths occur annually in India from malaria alone; and quoting further from the All-India Conference of Medical Research (1924-25) he estimates that the loss of efficiency of the average person from preventable malnutrition and disease is not less than 20 per cent.<sup>20</sup> The bubonic plague, malaria, cholera, smallpox and dysentery are major death-dealing diseases which, in the aggregate, destroy millions of people annually, and in the case of epidemic, destroy multiplied millions. Hookworm, an internal parasite, infests the entire population in some sections, and either makes them too languid and weak for sustained labor, or wholly incapacitates them. Kala-azar, a fever caused by a protozoal parasite, also takes a heavy toll in illness in certain parts of the country, while skin diseases, eye troubles, leprosy and many other ailments are wide-flung among village and city populations all the time.

These discouraging conditions are due largely to the ignorance

<sup>19</sup>Neill, Stephen, *Out of Bondage*, p. 63, Edinburgh House Press, 1927.

<sup>20</sup>Macnicol, Nicol, *India in the Dark Wood*, pp. 43-49, Edinburgh House Press, 1930. See also sections on health in the *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV.

of the people at large, their slavish adherence to custom, and their resignation to fate (*Karma* or *Kismet*). The elementary facts of preventive medicine have never penetrated the minds of the average villagers, so that, if not heavily quarantined, they continue to dip vessels from cholera-polluted homes into the common village wells and thereby effectually spread that terrible disease. Others suffering from guinea worm wade with bare feet into the reservoir of village drinking water and thereby spread this troublesome parasitic disease. Yet others suffering with smallpox are carried to the smallpox shrine to propitiate the anger of that particular evil spirit which is presumed to reside there, and thereby effectually spread this disease throughout the village. The giving of opium to babies by mothers engaged in manual labor, the overcrowding of living quarters in many joint-family homes, the housing of livestock in the families' living quarters, malnutrition, and general inadequate village sanitary conditions, promote the ravages of ill-health. As to the latter, Saunders draws a vivid picture of villages in South India. He writes: "They are for the most part a mass of houses, cattle-sheds, straw stacks, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs and fowls all huddled together and trying to live together. The lanes and alley-ways are narrow and crooked and are the only outlets for sewage which pollutes the air and invites the germs of disease. . . . No ground is left for wells or latrines or open spaces for recreation."<sup>21</sup> The Royal Commission on Agriculture also supports this general point of view in these words: "Sanitation, in any accepted sense is practically non-existent, so that a great many of the first principles of health, and disease prevention, remain to be learned and practiced by the masses of village of India."<sup>22</sup> However, the Punjab recently created a new department of government for the purpose of promoting general village improvement, and other governments have taken steps or contemplate taking steps to follow suit. More will be said about this in a subsequent chapter.

The improvement of health conditions is one of the major tasks of these new governmental departments; but even government, however solicitous of the welfare of its people, can not go forward in social reform very much faster than the masses are willing to go. We are constrained to remember that notwithstanding the valiant effort toward village improvement of such excellent public officials as F. L. Brayne, formerly of Gurgaon, and in spite of the teaching of mission schools and the work of mission and public hospitals and dispensaries for a long number of years, the health

<sup>21</sup> Saunders, A. J., *Land and Rural Economics*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.



conditions of Indian villages are generally very bad. Except when epidemics are rampant, there seems to be generally but little concern among the villagers for long-term economic or sanitary planning.

This feeling of non-concern is strengthened by a philosophy of life which, according to the opinions of some scholars, maintains a favorable attitude toward death. Dr. Wilson reflects this point of view dramatically in these words: "There is the social pattern of the philosophic view of death. . . The Indian villager, as indeed all Indian society, has a cheerful welcome for the thought of death. . . How strong is this contrast to that of our own American population, who are under obligation to maintain a standard of living, and therefore have no patience with dying. We exclude death from our thoughts, give it no place in our social philosophy, do not acknowledge the social value of death, and have almost muffled it in the administration of our Protestant religions."<sup>63</sup> Even though some students of Indian society might consider this statement of Indian attitudes toward death as a little too strong, few will likely question Dr. Wilson's major theme, namely, that Indian society is dominated primarily by values of a philosophical and a religious nature, rather than by values of an economic nature. Evidently, a philosophy of life that makes of death a welcome experience, or that minimizes economic values, would not place a very great store upon large fortunes nor upon the economic activities and disciplined restraints required for the amassing of wealth.

**Village Recreation.** In turning the spotlight of inquiry upon the recreational life of India, we should make a few introductory observations. In the first place we should recall other accounts in this book of how recreation and social intercourse are promoted through the market place, the mela, the pilgrimage, the festival, the law suit, the swaraj movement, cheap railway transportation, etc. In the next place we should point out that Indian village recreation is not so commercialized as our recreation, nor does it rank with our football and prize fights as to rigor. And furthermore, we should recall that the recreation of India, at least in many important respects, is quite different from that current in our own country, not only as to kind, but as to amount. These facts will emerge as we proceed with the account.

As yet, moving pictures have not penetrated the villages to any appreciable extent, so that the great mass of the village population has not come into contact with this form of amusement

<sup>63</sup>Wilson, Warren H., *former cit.*, p. 63.

and education. A returned missionary to India, in remarking upon the small place of the moving picture in village recreation, declares, "The level of Hollywood pictures sent to India makes one say, 'Thank Heaven!'" In fact, moving pictures as a form of amusement are confined largely to the cities; but even there they are not common. Dr. Cressey reported only twenty-one moving picture theatres in the city of Bombay at the time of his investigation in 1930, and Calcutta had but twenty-three. Only a few of these had talking pictures.<sup>34</sup> However, Government and the Christian missions make considerable use of stereopticon slides in the presentation of their educational programs among the villages. What has been said of the moving picture can also be said of the radio and many other commercialized forms of entertainment characteristic of most western countries.

One of the most common forms of recreation among the villages is some form of music, or music and dancing combined. Many a night, in his travels among the villages of India, the writer has listened for hours to the rhythmical thumping of the dholak (drum) accompanied by cymbals, a harmonium, and perhaps some sort of stringed instrument. Usually a singer, in a high-pitched voice, could be heard singing a number of bars to be joined by a chorus, all accompanied by the "bajanai" or orchestra. Those that we have seen thus engaged in music were almost always seated in close formation with folded legs, on the floor.

The writer had the opportunity of witnessing a *guyan sabbha* among a tribe of Bihls in western India. This, evidently, is somewhat different from the sort of music just described. This particular *guyan sabbha* consisted of two boys seated on the floor, one thumping a dholak and the other beating together two small cymbals. One also sang a solo part to be joined at intervals by the chorus. A group of twelve or fifteen other boys formed a circle around the two boys thus seated on the floor. They had in each hand a sort of instrument which in size and shape, at a distance, looked very much like a roller skate. Each of these hand instruments had a number of metallic discs that rattled and sounded very much like a tambourine when shaken. These boys would dance forward and backward, shaking the instruments in their hands, then turn completely around, bending their bodies to the rhythm and tirelessly working themselves almost into a frenzy. The crowd, including a few women, sat on the floor around the walls of the room, and took no part other than that of interested onlookers. The missionary who accompanied us said these boys

<sup>34</sup>Cressey, Paul F., *The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, pp. 142, 143.



would keep up this performance practically the whole night.

In giving a rather complete account of the forms of recreation employed by the people of a North Indian village, Dr. Wiser says that song, individual dancing, drama, wrestling and games are engaged in by the villagers themselves, and that on occasions visiting acrobatic troupes, animal trainers, snake charmers, and singers visit the village.<sup>35</sup> Also Mukerji, in writing of recreation in another village in northern India, describes the training and the flying of pigeons, very much as dog-racing is conducted in certain western countries, and mentions *keet-keet*, a primitive game involving considerable running, and *danda gooli*, a game involving the hitting of a short piece of wood on the ground by a longer stick in the hand.<sup>36</sup> However, the caste system seems to allocate the form of entertainment somewhat to certain groups, for Dr. Wiser observes that: "The best singers of the village gather from time to time at the house of one of the Sunars, a caste of goldsmiths";<sup>37</sup> and he also states that the dramatists of the village are the Kahars, a caste of water bearers, who perform chiefly for their own entertainment at weddings and other holiday occasions, though other castes often join in. As to the quality of these dramatic performances, Dr. Wiser further observes that as carried on in the village of Karimpur, they are often entertaining, though a dramatic critic would probably consider them horseplay. On a rare occasion, he continues, a visiting wedding party may bring in entertainers from outside the village, and a dramatic group from the city sometimes performs Krishna plays in a tent in a nearby larger village; and recently, even moving pictures have been added to the tent shows during the fair at this neighboring village.

That Indian dramatic art, at its best, is *really fine art*, cannot be denied. Only recently Uday Shan-Kar brought a troupe of interpretative dancers and musicians to America, and regardless of where their entertainment was given, it almost universally won the approval of the most exacting dramatic critics.<sup>38</sup> One critic, in expressing himself generally favorable to the dances and the accompanying music, observed that in some of the newer themes the performers were not at their best, but continued: "It was the older items that won the favor of the audience in every case, and three of them had to be repeated wholly or in part. These were Indra; Dance of the Hunter; and Astra Puja. . . Kanak-Lata's Ganga Puja was lovely as ever, and the long Tandava Nritya is

<sup>35</sup>Wiser, William H., *The Social Institutions of a Hindu Village in North India*, p. 301.

<sup>36</sup>Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, *Ghond the Hunter*, p. 65, Dutton.

<sup>37</sup>Wiser, *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>38</sup>See discussions of these performances in the *New York Times*, Sunday, February 4, 1934; likewise, see accounts given in the *Hartford Courant* of October 27, 1933.

unfailingly fascinating. The Devil Dance, in which the Monkey King and the Chief of the Demons wage warfare; Simkie's lyrical Spring Dance; the Snake Charmer of Shan-Kar; and the Peasant Dance of Shan-Kar and Simkie, were other dances from the old repertoire. . . . To most, if not all in the auditorium, the performance shed new light on the art of the dance. Based on the ancient dances of India, his choreography follows a pattern, the formal symbolism of which has few, if any, counterparts in the dances of the West. . . . It also lent insight into the formal beauties of an ancient civilization."<sup>89</sup>

**Village Education.** In a previous chapter devoted entirely to the schools of India, and elsewhere, we have given an account of the schools and colleges of India and the various handicaps that stand in the way of educational progress. We have also spoken of the systems of communication, and the work of the mail runner, the village reader, the returned traveller from the city, etc. In this section of our discussion of the social aspects of Indian village life, it will be our aim to round out our account of education by presenting certain important ideas and factors that have not thus far been emphasized.

One point that should be emphasized here is the fact that the Indian family and the Indian caste extend to their younger members a most valuable vocational education by the apprenticeship plan. When one reads Mukerji's account of Ghond the Hunter, Hari the Jungle Lad, Gay Neck, and Kari the Elephant, he is made to realize the vast fund of nature lore that is transmitted by local groups to their young and that is at once most interesting and also most valuable vocationally for those castes who make their living principally by hunting. The reader of such stories will also gain an excellent knowledge of the folklore and the philosophy of religion that permeate the whole social and cultural structure of village life in India today. The understanding expert agriculturist can see in the work of the Mali (florist), the Kachhi (vegetable grower), the Lodha (rice grower), not only expert knowledge, but also the mastery of fine arts in their respective fields which have been handed down for ages from father to son in these caste occupations. The same may be said of the vocations of the mat-makers, the barbers, the tradesmen, the jewelers, the soldiers, the genealogists, the bards, the priests, and others. While this system of apprenticeship education is caste-limited, and hence does not facilitate vocational adjustments through the passing of employees from one type of job to another,

<sup>89</sup>See *Hartford Courant*, October 27, 1933; also other issues reporting other performances of Shan-Kar's troupe in the city of Hartford.



it does give to each son a sound training on the doing level. Thus a costly and a more or less artificial system of vocational schools is not greatly needed, under caste conditions, to give the rising generation the mastery of vocations, so thus the rising generation "learns as it earns."

There is another source of village education that needs to be recognized, and that is the education in religion, literature, and philosophy transmitted by the village priest. Besides being a shepherd to his people, a comforter to the sorrowing, and a moulder of public opinion, the priest is also a philosopher, a spiritual guide and an instructor in many fields of intellectual interest. In fact, the intense religious nature of Indian peoples, whether they be Buddhist, Mohammedan, Hindu, or Christian, makes the "Man of God" in their midst one who is greatly respected and honored. Thus a man of great piety, learning, and purity is not wholly without honor in his own country.

The educational and the spiritual services rendered by the priesthood to the villages of India are exemplified by Mukerji in an account of a village of North India. Here "Radja", the priest, occupied the priestly office held by his ancestors for ten centuries. The village temple, built of concrete and stone, was adjacent to his own living quarters built of the same substantial material. In the courtyard of the temple, surrounded by a high wall, the priest every night read to his assembled people the Holy Scriptures and explained their spiritual meaning and poetic beauty to those reverently gathered in his presence, while the scream of a tiger or the trumpeting of a wild elephant would break the stillness of the night in the outlying jungle.<sup>40</sup> The same author portrays how in another village the priest rendered special temporal and spiritual aid to some of his "parishioners" who were troubled by the destructive visits of a ferocious wild buffalo. This animal had feasted on the crops of a village not far from the Lamasery, or temple and dwelling place of the Buddhist Lama who presided there, and had killed two people who were returning home from a meeting of the village elders held at the communal threshing floor. A deputation from this stricken village sought the aid of the Lama, to the end that through prayer and exorcism he might destroy the beast. The holy man promised the deputation that he would use such means as would result in the death of this murderous animal within twenty-four hours, and dismissed them with the benediction and warning, "Go home in peace, O beloved ones of Infinite Compassion. Your prayers will be answered. Do

<sup>40</sup>Mukerji, *Dhan Gopal, Gay Neck*, p. 122, Dutton, 1927.

not venture out of doors after night-fall. Stay home and meditate on peace and courage."<sup>41</sup> That the prayer in this particular case was answered, is shown by the fact that the Lama, an expert huntsman, and a helper also expert in hunting and jungle lore, went out that very night to slay the beast, and by the aid of lassoes dropped from the branches of a tree overhanging the path of the buffalo, and a bundle of old clothes placed in the buffalo's path under the tree to anger the animal, the beast was craftily entrapped, leading ultimately to his death by the thrust of a great hunting knife.

Another important fact to note in relation to the cultural life of Indian villages is that the vast amount of folklore, nature lore, and philosophical development accumulated throughout the past ages, makes India unique among contemporary peoples. Consequently we look to this country for a creative imagination, a richness of ideas, and a detachment from economic affairs that is needed for the creation of great art. Thus, in literature India has presented to the world the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, considered by competent authority as two of the great epic poems of all time; in architecture she has given us the Taj Mahal and many famous temples that rival the best ever produced by classical Greece and Rome; and through her village organization, her caste system, her family life, and her philosophy of life, though they have certain obvious imperfections, she is showing the West a method of escape from materialism.

In demonstrating this method of escape through various forms of cooperative effort and social relationships in the affairs of the daily life of the village, Indian society probably has something of value to offer the West. The West, living for the most part in a temperate climate which may become very cold in winter, may not find it desirable to copy literally many of the folkways of Indian life, but it may well ponder sympathetically the spirit behind these folkways. Especially the western reformer, burning with zeal to make over Indian social life along occidental patterns, is urged first, in a spirit of humility and patient inquiry, to learn the values of the existing social order of the villages and what it is in Indian society that has given it longevity and stability for thousands of years, while other so-called progressive civilizations have arisen, enjoyed for a time a heyday of success, then passed into oblivion. He may then discover that he has much of value to *learn*, as well as to teach; and the results of his subsequent efforts will probably prove sounder pedagogically, as well as more fruitful and more satisfying to all concerned.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 181.



## Chapter VII

### THE INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM

The student of Indian society cannot help being impressed with the role played by the caste system. The social and the economic organization of village life, marriage, worship, and other aspects of Indian civilization, in various direct and indirect ways, are organically and logically tied up with the caste system. Thus, in order to understand almost any phase of contemporary Indian life, one must gain at least some knowledge of this age-old socio-religious system.

#### *A General Description of the Caste System*

**Definition and General Backgrounds.** The Indian caste system cannot be adequately described or evaluated in a few brief statements, nor can its place in the contemporary social order be rightly sensed unless one has taken time and pains to see it in action and to make of it a life study. However, certain aspects of the system need to be described here, in order that one of our most important interpretative spotlights may be turned upon the social culture of this great country.

A caste, as found in India, is defined as an endogamous group, or collection of endogamous groups, i. e., those who marry within certain specific limits, bearing a common name, whose members follow traditionally a single occupation or certain cognate occupations, who have by fact or fiction a common origin and are generally deemed to form a homogeneous unit.<sup>1</sup> And outside the pale of caste are homeless ascetics who have chosen a life of self-negation, and by doing so have abandoned all earthly ties. As

<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 4, p. 977; Ibid., Vol. 12, p. 168, presents a slightly more inclusive definition of caste. For background purposes, see Cooley, Charles H., Social Organization, Part IV, Classes and Castes; Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, Caste and Outcaste, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1923; Mukerjee, Radhakamal, Democracies of the East, Ch. 18, The Relation between Caste and Neighborhood Groups, P. B. King & Son, Ltd., Westminster, 1923; Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I, Ch. 4, Caste and the Depressed Classes, His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1930.

begging holy men, they wander from place to place, sometimes living in colonies almost on a level with the beasts of the jungle. They are recruited from all classes, "from the King down to the barber."

It is obvious to students of the caste system in India that beside the socio-cultural and the economic elements entering into the definition of caste, there are also religious elements as well. For example, the belief that caste distinctions and status are divinely appointed, hence are just, and that through the divinely appointed schemes of transmigration of the soul and dharma man may ultimately attain perfection, are basic concepts of caste. To illustrate, it is assumed that through a person's actions in one of a succession of incarnations or states of existence, his fate is decided as to the next. To be more specific: "The caste into which a man is born in this life is the just reward of his actions in a previous birth. If when he is born again into the world he would be born into a higher caste, he must merit it by exact performance of his dharma or caste duty. He must not fall below it, neither may he presume, even if he is but a sweeper, to rise above it."<sup>2</sup> The principle of social distinction based upon caste stratification is also recognized by the Laws of Manu (1:96) and other sacred literature,<sup>3</sup> and is traditionally supported by a rigid application of custom. Even though the definition of caste, such as we have given here, is largely applicable to modern India, it is subject to many qualifications which are noted, in part, in the following pages.

It would be difficult to trace satisfactorily the origin of the caste system in India. In Chapter Two of this book were given certain hints as to its probable origin; but, historically, it is assumed by most scholars of oriental peoples that the caste system in its modern sense probably did not exist in ancient India. According to Mazumder, it was in the Medieval Period of Indian history, which began with the fall of the Kingdom of Harsha (647 A. D.), that a number of socio-cultural characteristics, including caste, were ushered in which even today mark off Hindu society somewhat from the rest of the civilized world.<sup>4</sup> However, there seems to be but little knowledge available upon this matter in pre-Aryan times. It was not until the Vedic-Arya period, about 1200 B. C., that any records were available. Some of the early hymns of the Rig-Veda give an account of invaders, presenting

<sup>2</sup> Neill, Stephen, *Out of Bondage*, pp. 18-19; and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, pp. 95-98. As to the place of caste in Hindu philosophy of religion, see Radhakrishnan, S., *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village in North India*, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Mazumder, Narendranath, *A History of Education in Ancient India*, Macmillan Co., Ltd., Calcutta, 1916, p. 15. See also former chapter on Indian Schools.



some notions of social distinction as to their chieftains and nobility, and as to the feudal arrangements between clans and tribes. The account of the formation of social strata given there explains what was probably the beginning of the caste system. In the latest Vedic literature the Brahmin is recognized as the head of the social order; and after the Vedic period, near the beginning of the Christian era, the Laws of Manu were compiled. The latter recognized and gave status to four social classes: the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas, and the Sudras.<sup>5</sup> The first three of these are designated by the Hindus as the *twice-born*. The Laws of Manu also give, by indirection, an idea of how new castes are formed, for they state that while the ideal spouse of a man is a bride of his own caste (endogamy), marriage to a woman of a caste below his own (hypergamy) is an offense that in some cases would diminish the son's share in the inheritance, and under certain other circumstances is an unpardonable sin disinheriting the children altogether and relegating them to a degraded caste.<sup>6</sup> Therefore we infer that the intermarriage of castes has been a major source of the formation of new castes, though migration, change of occupation, change in social practice, change due to pollution, change due to increased prosperity, change due to strife, change due to religion, etc., are also factors that work toward the multiplication of castes, seemingly without end. A section of a caste once split off does not rejoin the original caste, nor does it coalesce with others to form larger communities of the same character. However, as to the latter, some authorities seem to disagree somewhat. Even today new castes and sub-castes are being formed,<sup>7</sup> so that it is estimated that there are from 2,000 to 2,500 caste and sub-castes in India.<sup>8</sup> These facts bearing upon caste formation indicate that in a limited, special sense, castes are not so rigid in their control over individuals as the casual observer might think.

**What Makes Caste.** We have already presented some ideas as to the probable historical origins of caste; we have also stated that one gets into a given caste by birth, though he may later, through the infraction of caste rules, become degraded; and we have said that according to orthodox Hindu religious philosophy,

<sup>5</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 4, p. 907. For a review of the Indian caste system see Vol. IV, pp. 33-37 of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry; or for a more extended view, see Thurston and Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, or a similar work covering the Central Provinces by Russell and Lal.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 917.

<sup>7</sup> Wheeler, Wm. H., *Ibid.*, p. 136, quoting Churya, C. S., *Caste and Race*; see also Olcott's *Village Schools of India*, pp. 57-62.

<sup>8</sup> The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, pp. 35, 38. See also Thurston and Rangachari, *The Castes and Tribes of Southern India*.

the only way a lower caste man can move upward in the caste scale is through a combination of dharma, death, and reincarnation.

At this juncture it may be well to point out a little more clearly what sets one caste off socially from another. This we shall do by describing the six most important distinguishing characteristics or social practices that *make caste*, once an individual is born into a caste group. These are: segmentation of society, hierarchy, restrictions on eating and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities and privileges, restrictions of choice in occupation, and restrictions in marriage. There are other distinguishing characteristics, as one may easily note in reading such revealing works as Thurston and Rangachari's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*; Russell and Lal's *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*; Rivers' *The Todas*; Churye's *Castes and Race in India*, etc.

**α) Segmentation, Hierarchy, Vocation.** In order to illustrate the segmentation of society, hierarchy, restrictions as to vocation, and to a limited extent other distinguishing characteristics of the caste system, we present an actual case described by Dr. Wiser in a village in North India.<sup>1</sup> The castes found here, in a descending sequence from the highest to the lowest, together with their vocations, are classified by Dr. Wiser as follows:

Brahmin	(Brahmin, priest and teacher
and related	(Bhat, family bard and genealogist
Kshatriya	(Kyasth, accountant
and related	(Sunar, goldsmith
	(Mali, florist
	(Kachhi, vegetable grower
	(Lodha, rice grower
	(Barhai, carpenter
	(Lohar, iron-smithy
Sudra	(Nai, barber
and related	(Kahar, water bearer
	(Gadariya, shepherd
	(Bharbhunja, grain parcher
	(Darzi, seamster
	(Kumhar, potter
	(Mahajan, tradesman
	(Teli, oil presser

<sup>1</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *The Hindu Jajmani System*, p. 4; also see Mazumdar, op. cit., Ch. III, *The Caste System*.



## Out-castes

- (Dhobi, washerman
- (Dhanuk, mat maker
- (Chamar, leather worker
- (Bhangi, sweeper and cesspool cleaner
- (Fakir, hereditary Mohammedan beggar
- (Manihar, Mohammedan glass bangle seller
- (Dhuna, Mohammedan cotton carder
- (Tawaif, Mohammedan dancing girl

In this classification Dr. Wiser does not designate any of these castes as belonging to the Vaisya, or second large division of castes below the Brahmin, composed of merchants and tradesmen, though we rather suspect that the Mahajans and possibly a few other castes of this particular village may belong to that division. However, Dr. Wiser correctly points out that while all in this list are separate castes so far as occupation is concerned, in a religious sense all can hardly be termed castes; for example, the Bhangis, who often are Christians, and those holding to Mohammedanism who theoretically do not form castes, since the Koran does not recognize such social distinctions. Furthermore, the reader may recall that Christianity, making its gains mostly in the outcaste group, in reality, at least in many sections, has formed a new caste, the Christian caste. According to the belief of some, there are in some sections of the country caste distinctions even in the Christian church itself. We may also recall that Mohammedanism in India has become tainted with both the caste system and the indigenous religions of India. These factors add to the complexity of the caste system here, and probably, to a degree, weaken it. This appearance of complexity is intensified when we reflect that a caste in one section may not recognize any social tie with a body bearing the same name in another section of the country, though sometimes the same vernacular is used by both. Each caste may also be subdivided into respective endogamous sections, some of them professing a different form of religion and quite different position in the social hierarchy from those of a similar name elsewhere.

In terms of "segmentation", we note that in this particular village the social order is broken up into at least twenty-five distinct fragments, and in terms of hierarchy, there is a gradual elevation in social status from one of the lowest outcastes (Tawaif) to the Brahmin, who is the capsheaf of the caste system.

As to restriction in choice of vocation, two observations should be made: First in this village the jajmani system operates,

which, in a sense, is a system of vocational interdependencies of the castes wherein each working, within limits, in turn becomes a *jajman* and then a *kam-karnewala*; or, in other words, there is an exchange of service so that in turn there is one who is served and one who serves. Second, such elasticity as exists in the hereditary caste vocations grows less as the lower rounds of the scale are approached, and grows greater as the stratum of Brahmin is approached. An example of the rigidity of caste observance in vocations was related to the writer by a missionary which concerned a case in his own experience. His gardener, alone, could not well do all the work and, on the other hand, his water carrier did not have enough work to employ his full time or to support his family. To solve the difficulty, the missionary proposed that the water carrier help the gardener part of the time. The latter objected on the grounds that these were two separate hereditary occupations and it would be breaking caste rules to share work with a water carrier. Finding the gardener obdurate in his objections and fearing that to press the case might end in a complete boycott among the local caste of gardeners, the missionary acceded to the gardener's objections. On the other hand, while neither the gardener, the water carrier, nor any of the lower castes can become goldsmiths, accountants, bards or priests, the upper castes, within certain limits and under certain restrictions, may do some of the work of the lower castes. In Karimpur Dr. Wiser found many, in fact most, of the castes doing a certain amount of subsistence farming; but the movement was a one-way process. Thus the social stratification of caste is not strictly a uniform horizontal fission of the social order, for, to a degree, the upper castes may penetrate those *below* them in a vertical manner. This is particularly true of the Brahmins, who in some sections have taken up crime as a profession, and in others engage in trade, law, teaching, governmental service, and sometimes medicine. When economic pressure is severe, the Brahmin may even descend to farm labor, domestic work, or any vocation not involving actual defilement, without loss of caste.

**b) Other Restrictions.** Those caste distinctions bearing upon restrictions in eating and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities and privileges, and restriction in marriage, will now be discussed from the standpoint of social taboos.

According to Blunt, food taboos and pollution by touch form excellent criteria for classifying castes.<sup>11</sup> The writer was introduced to this fact in his travels throughout India. Thus on one occasion

<sup>11</sup>Wiser, Wm. H. *The Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, pp. 88, 125, quoting a number of authorities on caste distinctions.



when visiting a mission school at Katpadi, in South India, attended mostly by outcaste and low caste boys, we noted that two higher caste boys who had recently enrolled, tied their lunches to the rafters of the roof of the schoolroom so as to prevent the pollution of their food by the touch or the shadows of their inferior caste schoolmates. On another occasion, while visiting a mission at Yeotmal in Eastern India, the writer and a missionary went to some outlying villages and witnessed the return of two low caste hunters. These hunters had snared and slain a wild pig, and were trudging home with the carcass. While giving a dramatic account of the capture of the animal to those gathered around, they were careful to see that our shadows should not fall on the pig and thereby render its flesh unfit for food. Again, while we were staying for a few days at a mission normal school at Nagpur in Central India, the principal informed us that at a forthcoming entertainment to be held there, to which a number of higher caste people were invited, she had assured them at the time of the invitation that the refreshments to be served would be purchased at a particular market in the city where high caste regulations were rigidly observed in the preparation, packaging, and dispensing of food. And on numerous occasions, while visiting Hindu temples, we noted that while circumambulating the temples, those who had performed their *pūja* (worship) were careful that our shadows should not touch them.

But pollution by touch has its variations throughout the country. In some sections the idea of ceremonial pollution is confined to actual contact, while in other sections pollution is not considered to occur if the lower caste individual remains twenty-four feet or more distant, while yet other sections designate other distances at which pollution takes place. In some sections the twice-born, under certain circumstances will take water and certain kinds of sweetmeats from the hands of those socially lower on the caste ladder; and there are those whose touch defiles the twice-born Brahmins, who are not so degraded as to eat beef.<sup>11</sup> Many caste Hindus will not eat food prepared by Mohammedan cooks; and in different castes and sections of the country, other taboos are observed, such as that which forbids a man to sit down at a meal next to his mother, sister, wife, or daughter. It is observed that these taboos are not lived up to as closely in the cities as in the villages.

Minor pollutions, especially if attained through accident, are absolved by ceremonially washing the hands and the mouth; and the more serious pollutions, if they can be removed at all, are recti-

<sup>11</sup> Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 18.



FIG. X. WOMEN TYPES. 1. A Nepali girl; 2. A Bengali beauty and her child; 3. A Burmese girl; 4. A Ganjam mother and child. Note the jewelry worn by these women.





fied through a more onerous and severe regimen of purification, such as paying fines and giving expensive feasts to the Brahmins, going on long pilgrimages to designated holy places, acceptance of a lower caste status, and otherwise carrying out the decisions of the panchayat or village council which exercises judicial authority in such cases.

The account of a "heinous" case of pollution was related to the writer while travelling in South India. A young man of a well-to-do family, while passing through the courtyard one morning, was attracted by the comeliness of a lower caste servant girl who happened to be passing that way on the routine of her duties. Whether through thoughtlessness or otherwise, the young man laid his hand on the girl's shoulder in order to begin a friendly conversation. The girl uttered a wild screech which brought forth the servants in a hubbub from every quarter, and sank to the earth in a swoon. This was only the beginning of further excitement, for the girl considered herself thus selected as the hypergamous spouse of the young man and wished to be so accepted by the young man and his family. He violently dissented and barricaded himself in his room, while the girl patiently and persistently took up her position outside his door in a sort of siege. This state of affairs was quickly brought to the attention of the panchayat, which went into numerous executive sessions trying to devise a suitable way out of the *impasse*. The panchayat finally decided that since caste law and custom permitted a man, in certain cases, to marry a woman in a lower caste, and since the young man had been polluted through touch, the difficulty should be solved by the young man performing rigorous penance for a time, which included a pilgrimage to a distant holy place, the payment of a heavy fine, and the performance of certain other purification rites that to the uninitiated westerner would probably be considered degrading. The girl was also to go through a rigorous prescribed regimen of purification, and in the end the marriage was to be fully consummated, regardless of the wishes of either or both parties to the contrary. The new family thus to be formed was also assigned a social status somewhat lower than that of the young man's parents.

Another example of offense against caste law, and the severity of punishment of the offender, is related by Dr. Wiser, quoting from Monier Williams' experience in the Gujarat.<sup>11</sup> One Lallu-bhai, a cloth merchant of the city of Ahmedabad, had broken caste rules by marrying a widow of his own caste. This was considered by his caste a heinous offense. Forthwith he was sentenced to absolute

<sup>11</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 223, quoting Williams. Monier, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, John Murray, London, 1883.



excommunication, which involved a complete boycott of his business, and the forbidding of anyone to associate with him, eat with him, marry any of his children, or do business with him in any way. Moreover, no temple was to receive him as a worshipper, and if he died no one was to carry his body to the burning ground. This edict literally freed his debtors from their obligations to him, and even if he had gone to court to sue for the payment of debts, no one would give evidence in his behalf or otherwise assist him in the redress of his grievance through recourse to civil law. The edict was carried out to the letter, and he found himself a ruined man. He had to abandon his home, his business, and his former associates and obtain a government position in a distant city.

However, as the result of improvement in means of rapid transportation and as the result of the reform efforts of the Arya Samaj and other agencies, the severity of caste regulations governing inter-caste marriage, the remarriage of widows, inter-caste dining, etc. is being noticeably relaxed, especially in certain parts of the country. Also the possibility of one's readily withdrawing from the unreasoned fury of one's village to gain a respectable living elsewhere, offers a means of escape that many in recent years seem willing to follow. Consequently the village caste authorities, sensing these momentous changes, are tempering the punishment for infringement of caste regulations and are requiring feasts for the brethren, or exacting small fines, instead of excommunication and other rigorous forms of punishment. The ban of ostracism, while yet maintained, is usually a temporary punitive device which is relaxed as soon as the other lesser judicial requirements are met.<sup>13</sup>

The food taboos, which are formulated to prevent pollution by touch have been summarized, in part, by Dr. Wiser as follows:<sup>14</sup>

1. The communal taboo, which prescribes the persons in whose company one may eat food.
2. The cooking taboo, which prescribes who may cook one's food.
3. The food taboo, which prescribes the kind of food one may eat.
4. The eating taboo, which prescribes the ritual one may practice at a meal.
5. The drinking taboo, which prescribes the persons from whom one may take water.
6. The smoking taboo, which prescribes the persons whose pipe one may smoke, and in whose presence one may smoke.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 83, 135, quoting Blunt and others.

7. The vessel taboo, which lays down the sort of vessel one may use in eating, drinking, and cooking.

### *Values of the Caste System*

Having given some attention, in a descriptive way, to what the Indian caste system is, it is of interest to attempt a social evaluation of it. This is exceedingly difficult for a western student to do, for traditionally it has generally been assumed by western scholars that the caste system is wholly bad and that it has nothing of positive value to offer to either the East or the West. For the time being, putting aside the troublesome question of whether we have a caste system in America, nominally if not in fact, we shall attempt at least a partial evaluation of the caste system in India.

**Negative Values.** Those who are inclined to criticize the caste system say that it is based upon an unproved, if not false assumption, when it is assumed that the system is divinely appointed. These critics ask, where is there a trace of divinely appointed justice that will consign to social degradation a low caste or out-caste man with the intelligence of a genius, while the high caste moron is given social preferment? These critics claim that such seeming incongruities are due wholly to man-made conventionalities which are perpetuated according to standards wholly oblivious to biological facts and social justice. In answer to the first criticism, a Hindu philosopher might ask just who is to blame for the differences in the potential intelligence or I. Q. of people, if God has nothing to do with it? He might accede to the statement that intelligence, biologically given, has but slight recognition in the caste system; but with emphasis upon the social order, he might ask, how far can one with great potential intelligence proceed alone untouched by what society has to offer? He might also ask what is there in the caste system to rob a man of his potential intelligence, or the fruits of it, if he chooses to exercise it toward individualistic and selfish ends? He might even continue, and argue that in the subordination of the individual to the caste group there is set up a socialized state where selfishness and rugged individualism are held in check for the public good, and that through the ascetic performance of his dharma, one may attain the freedom of the soul that is indeed the largest freedom imaginable.

It is also said that caste rules work toward the perpetuation of *status quo* and a disinclination to reward personal achievement and experimentation. In support of this statement the critics may point to the static condition that seems to have been characteristic of Indian society for long centuries; and they may also point out that the successful meeting of famine and pestilence conditions



in recent years has been almost wholly accomplished through western science and leadership. The Hindu philosopher might accede to some of these assertions but point out that what is charged to the caste system may well be charged largely to the effects of a warm climate and overpopulation; and on the other hand, he might assert that notwithstanding the caste system, India and China are the only two great modern peoples whose history and social order extend continuously back to beyond 2000 B. C. He might ask if such longevity is based on weakness rather than strength? And reviewing the events of the recent Great War and the economic depression that followed it, he might ask westerners who boast of their progress to what demonstrably desirable goals they themselves are progressing, and how they will know when they have reached these goals?

The critics might also say that the caste system, by assigning to a man the occupation in which his father engaged, prevents vocational adjustments and thereby robs the individual of the pleasure of free choice of vocation. The Hindu philosopher would probably agree, but also might add that through the division of labor provided by the caste system, particularly under Jajmani arrangements, there is provided work for all; fads are not allowed to overcrowd certain professions for a while and thereby throw the finely balanced social structure out of order, as seems to be the case in other countries; and cooperation rather than competition is thus emphasized, even if it is not done wholly on a democratic and symmetrical basis. This philosopher might inquire if this is any worse than the economic stratification and lack of inclination toward vocational adjustments in western countries owing to specialization in industry, militant trade unionism, labor wars, and "rugged individualism." He might also charge the critics of having their attention centered too narrowly on the wealthier classes where the caste system flourishes best and where it probably shows up its weaknesses most glaringly. In the poorer castes and among out-castes, he might add, the caste system, in certain respects, is usually weakest, permitting greater democracy in vocation and social relationships. Thus, since the poor are in the vast majority, it is among them that the caste system should have its major evaluation.

The critics, pointing to the food and communal taboos and the restrictions placed upon marriage by caste, might argue that such prohibitions are hurtful to human dignity and are nonsensical. The philosopher might assent to the fact that such taboos and prohibitions exist, and using the *tu quoque* sort of argument, might ask the critics to justify certain forms of western table eti-

quette, and ask them, while criticizing caste restrictions to marriage in India, why a number of States in America have passed laws against intermarriage among certain races?

**What the Caste System Does.** Requesting our hypothetical Hindu philosopher to hold his peace for a moment, we shall present, by way of topical summary, the disadvantages of the Hindu caste system as viewed by Dr. Wiser, whom we quote in part:<sup>15</sup>

1. It segments society into divisions by birth and does not take into account individual differences in inborn abilities. A Bhangi with an I. Q. of 150 still must remain a Bhangi and assume that he is a different creature from the Brahmin who may have an I. Q. of 75.
2. Its hierarchy fixes the Brahmin at the social apex and the untouchable at the base. Here regardless of native ability the low caste must make the best of his status. This works toward a philosophy of fatalism and resigned discouragement.
3. Food taboos and pollution by touch prevent dining together and a free intercourse of human beings who may be intellectually equal. Taboos on certain articles of food, such as beef, also rob the people of needed elements of nutrition.
4. Its civil and religious disabilities prevent men of all castes from mixing freely in the use of public services.
5. Its lack of choice of occupations takes no cognizance of potential skills of various kinds in a given caste, but arbitrarily fixes the occupational status of each according to birth. Yet we might add that many of the great religious seers of India, revered by all castes, have come from the lower castes.
6. Its marriage restrictions prevent intermarriage on the basis of intellectual equality.
7. Its religious sanctions offer nothing in this life for those born in the lower castes.
8. It prevents the formation of a solid national unity.

Thus it appears that: "The caste into which a man is born determines for the rest of his life his position in the social scale. It settles the forms of his speech, his diet, his personal relations, his profession, his marriage, his funeral, the gods he must worship, and the duties he must perform."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, pp. 300-314.

<sup>16</sup>Neill, Stephen, *Out of Bondage*, pp. 18-19.



**Positive Values.** In the foregoing discussion our hypothetical Hindu philosopher, in rebutting certain criticisms of the caste system, has pointed out some important positive values. He might also have placed a heavy burden on the western critics to prove that all the eight objections listed above are really hurtful to Indian society under the condition in which it lives. He might even insinuate that the critics are impressed with the strangeness rather than with the real and deeper values of the caste system, and that they are judging by western standards which are not above suspicion even in the West, and which in many cases are utterly inadequate for the Orient. He might even ask the critics to prove that the western individualistic standards by which they seem to measure values are superior to the Indian communal values which dominate the caste system. This philosopher, at least by indirection, has implied that the caste system has many admirable traits that fit in well with the exigencies of a hot climate and a poverty-stricken populace which places no emphasis on material values that have proved evanescent even in the West. Such virtues of the caste system are apt to be overlooked by the western student who is impressed by the folkways of a people in many respects quite unlike those of his own country.

To repeat somewhat our previous discussions of the social relationship and responsibilities of a positive value accruing from the caste system, it may be pointed out that each caste functions as the member of a body in the performance of services necessary to the welfare of both the individual and the caste groups; and custom and religious sanction make these relationships automatic.<sup>17</sup> This relationship is clearly understood by each individual, and probably works far more smoothly, efficiently, and with less friction than the western critics standing on the side-lines can understand or are willing to admit.

While we may not agree with the orthodox caste Hindu that God has assigned, according to caste, separate social duties and separate occupations to each individual from birth, we may easily note in the caste system, especially in the jajmani structure, a valuable service relationship,—a relationship that fits well into the primitive, self-sufficient economy existent in the typical village. The main objection that may logically be placed against this relationship is its asymmetrical or uneven dispensation among the castes. On the other hand, this caste society takes care of its own defective and dependent members as the normal functioning of

<sup>17</sup>St. Paul sensed very clearly these social relationships as functioning in the affairs of the early Christian Church. 1. Corinthians, 12:4-26.

the joint-family or clan, and it provides a social solidarity that migrants to the city miss greatly, especially in times of economic stress. This fact is attested by a missionary who states that: "Over and over again I have asked city-dwelling Indians where their homes are. Invariably the answer has been the name of some village—never the name of the city." Withal, the cultural atmosphere surrounding caste enables the individual to fulfill his dharma most effectively, works toward preservation of the purity of family blood, provides effective restraints for the erring, and assures stability of social, economic, political, and spiritual status.

Finally, we may ask ourselves whether the caste system has anything to offer, in the field of social organization, that countries of the West might well emulate. A missionary in viewing the caste system as a whole, and while disapproving many of its basic assumptions and some of its harsher practices, writes: "If we who come to serve them [the Indian villagers] are prepared to listen as well as to teach, we shall find that in exchange for our contribution from the outside world, they have much of value from their own severe schooling to share with us."<sup>14</sup> He sees here a strong sense of group allegiance and group loyalty which, through integrating aims and purposes, works toward peace and contentment. It does not seem that rugged individualism, either here or in western countries, could attain such happy results, for it seems that individualism, untempered by social and spiritual values, leads to privilege, license, and the amassing of great wealth in the hands of the few while the masses undergo grinding fear and privation. In fact, judging by recent events, many countries of the West need a new insight into a social responsibility that will cause the strong willingly to bear the burdens of the weak and that will show civilized man that he can neither live by himself nor by bread alone.

### *Changes Taking Place in the Caste System*

Even though the caste system in India is hoary with age and tradition, and even though it has values that India, undisturbed by outside forces would gladly retain, it is undergoing discernible changes. There are now many forces both external and internal to the Indian caste system which are beginning to work profound changes in it. These, in their entirety, are difficult to inventory, so we shall be content here with only a partial and cursory treatment of the subject.

In the first place, the democratic movements throughout the world that have resulted in the dethronement of kings, and that

<sup>14</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *The Hindu Jajmani System*, pp. 289-90.



have made the depressed classes vocal and ready to contest for equal privileges with the ruling classes, have begun to strike upon the consciousness of the masses of India. The education of Indian young men and women in western universities has probably accelerated this movement.

In the second place, the desire for swaraj has accentuated the movement. It has been obvious, even to the most casual thinker, that swaraj under the traditional caste system would probably be little more than the transference of government from the British to a group of ruling castes, which through nepotism and subterfuge, would hold the reins of government and oppress the lower castes. Moreover, as has been pointed out by some of the swaraj or home rule leaders, consistency and honesty require that the upper castes shall not demand in the name of democracy a greater participation in government than they are willing to concede to the lower castes. Thus, the freedom so much discussed by swaraj leaders is being expanded in the minds of thoughtful minorities to include freedom from Brahmin rule quite as much as freedom from foreign rule.

In the third place, Government, through its various efforts toward universal education, agricultural and other economic improvement, hospitalization, and the awarding of even-handed justice to all the people regardless of castes, has succeeded in making telling inroads upon the caste system.

In the fourth place, modern methods of travel have made cheap transportation available to all classes. The automobile is facilitating travel from place to place, and as pointed out in a previous chapter, Indian railways, largely because of the cheap third-class rates, carry a vast number of passengers. By travelling on such a large scale, the castes, both low and high, associate more or less freely and intimately, and thus have broken one of the fundamental rules of the traditional system (Fig. VIII).

In the fifth place, Christian missions, through their teaching of the common fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of man, are injecting a new social principle into the life of India; and these missions through the various nation-building activities in which they engage, and the influence they have exerted generally by precept and example, have worked toward the breaking down of caste distinctions. It has often been pointed out that the education of the depressed classes has enabled their young men and women to fill teaching posts and other places of honor that give them a more favorable status with the upper castes.

In the sixth place, Christian missions through the evangeliza-



FIG. XI. WOMEN'S WORK. 1. Women preparing cow dung cakes for fuel, Nagpur; 2. Women transporting a pinto, Nagpur; 3. Women pounding rice, Madras; 4. Women watering, Allahabad.





tion and education of the outcastes and lower castes have shown that these people are capable of attaining higher education and effective leadership. The mass movement toward Christianity wrought among the depressed classes has awakened an active interest in these classes on the part of the higher castes. This is evidenced by the efforts of the Arya Samaj, an organization aiming to cleanse traditional Hinduism of some of its anachronisms and to win back to the fold of Hinduism those who have been converted to Christianity and Mohammedanism.

In the seventh place, a number of social reform movements promoted by the All-India Women's Conference, the Women's Indian Association of Madras, the Stree Bharata Mandal of Calcutta and North India, the Seva Sadan of Bombay, and like societies scattered throughout India, in various direct and indirect ways, are reducing caste distinctions.<sup>17</sup>

How far these changes have gone we have no way of fully knowing, for external appearances are often deceptive. But those who are consciously working for the alteration of the caste system, if not its abolition, may well proceed with caution, conscious of the fact that it has served India for long centuries, and that which is to take its place must fit into a country having a hot climate, an economic order characterized by the poverty of the masses, a spiritually-minded people, and a social order where individualism traditionally has been held in check. Evidently evolution rather than revolution should be the method of procedure adopted, and intelligence, patience, and an appreciation of the tested values of the present system are advised.

In contemplating these facts, Dr. Wiser suggests that such alterations as may be sought in the social affairs of Indian villages should be aimed as a complementary development of the individual and society, rather than as a complete replacement of the existing social order.<sup>18</sup> To secure such a filling-in of the inadequacies of the existent social order, he suggests that:

1. The government of the village should be left largely in the control of the village leaders.
2. Rights in land holdings must be kept fairly stable.
3. Rights to certain occupations must be kept fairly stable.
4. Religious freedom must be granted to all.
5. Families must be granted freedom of individual development.
6. Educational, recreational, political, and medical facilities must be open to all without respect to birth.

<sup>17</sup>See Das, Mrs. Saraswathi, *Purdah*, especially Chs. 16, 13, 14, the Vanguard Press, 1932.

<sup>18</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 214.



Since many reformers, both native and foreign, are proposing vital changes in the life and customs of India, it would seem to be a counsel of wisdom that these changes should be predicated upon an adequate base of pertinent facts. This calls for research. Thus, the Lindsay Commission on Christian Higher Education (1931), sensing the need for research to guide the various efforts toward social reconstruction in India, states that "Christian doctrine in its application to politics, has to be interpreted in the light of actual Indian conditions and actual Indian problems,"<sup>1</sup> and it further challenges the colleges to a program of research and extension education. Numerous economic problems having to do with agricultural production and marketing, and that impinge in various ways upon the questions of industrialization, absentee land holding, and the extension of internal improvements, need to be studied by many research agencies in a spirit of humility and scientific open-mindedness. Thus, also, should be treated the various political and social problems, dealing in various ways with the efforts toward autonomy in government and aimed to promote among the masses better health, greater literacy, cultural unity, and a more intelligent appreciation of their own indigenous cultural heritages. Research should not be directed so much toward discovering what is *wrong* with India, as toward discovering what is *right* with India, for we must remember that Indian culture and Indian society, with minor occasional disturbances owing to invasions and internal wars, have continued these thousands of years, while mighty empires of the West have risen to pass into decay and oblivion. We end this chapter by asking again this troublesome question: Is this continuity of Indian culture and society due to weakness, or is it due to strength? Research, to be constructive, must be based on a sound social philosophy; and progress, to be real, must be projected on the elements of social strength indigenous to the society to be served.

<sup>1</sup>The Report of the Commission on Christian Higher Education in India, pp. 162, 163, Oxford University Press, 1931.

## Chapter VIII

### THE INDIAN FAMILY

In our study of the village and the caste, we have frequently touched upon the family. A logical and fairly complete analysis of any of these important institutional structures, it would seem, ultimately leads to the primary unit of Indian society, the family. This makes the family an important gateway to an understanding of Indian culture, so we wish to analyze it in this chapter.

#### *Philosophical Concepts Underlying the Family Institution*

**Subordination of the Individual.** The basic concept underlying the family, as well as the whole social order in India, seems to be the subordination of the individual. In some ways this concept is quite unlike the American concept, which appears to make the individual the primary unit of society. Yet in many respects, as we shall note in passing, the differences in the American and the Indian concepts as to the basic units of society are more apparent than real.<sup>1</sup> However, when this question in its Indian setting is followed into some of its practical workings, one wonders whether the principle of the subordination of the individual is really holding true. There are, at least to the stranger from the West, seeming paradoxes in the Indian social order, which, when the situations are better understood, usually right themselves so that the social order again appears logical, if indeed very complex. Some of these seeming paradoxes we shall attempt to disentangle in passing.

Keenly sensing the subordinate place of the individual in Indian village life, so far as caste is concerned, Dr. Wiser writes of Karimpur, a village in North India, as follows: "Men and women regard their caste obligations and privileges as of greater importance than personal interest. They look upon themselves and their

<sup>1</sup>The reader might well recall the Bill of Rights incorporated in the American Federal Constitution. A review of the struggle for individual liberty and its protection may also well be made in such works as Beard, Charles A., *American Government and Politics*; Dawson, E., *Organized Self-Government*; and Lowell, A. L., *Public Opinion and Popular Government*.



neighbors, not as individuals, but as members of castes. . . . Individuality is subordinated and we can understand the individual, his actions and his thought-life, only through knowing the group of which he is a part."<sup>2</sup> It might seem at first thought that the caste, rather than the family, is the primary social unit in India, but if this be true, it is in only a very specialized and limited sense, for if the caste lays down rigid rules upon the individual, it is through birth in a family that one normally attains membership in the castes; and if one, because of the infringement of caste rules, becomes socially degraded, this degradation is automatically imposed upon his family as well. Thus, it is through the agency of the family that one's social status in the caste is attained.

The Indian philosophy of marriage, evidently, is that of the subordination of the individual. Writing in this vein, the great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, states: "Each of the domestic ceremonies, from the birth celebration to the funeral, is but an expression of the debt which each member owes to his community. From this it becomes evident that our society is not like a stream on which its members float in comparative freedom, but like the earth in whose depths their root-system is held secure."<sup>3</sup> As bearing upon the householder's estate, Dr. Tagore writes more specifically in these words: "Courage, in the ethics of Peace, means the courage of self-sacrifice; there bravery has for its object the triumph of Renunciation. And in societies where such sacrifice and renunciation are cultivated, not the individual but the household is the primary unit, and such a household is broad, not narrow in conception and content."<sup>4</sup>

If the individual is thus subordinated in the householder's estate, certain corollaries naturally follow. The first is that marriage is an obligation that the individual cannot honorably escape. Writing in this vein the Poet continues: "In society where the household is founded on the comfort and convenience of the individual, his acceptance or non-acceptance of the householder's estate remains optional. If any such should say that he does not care for domestic joys, but prefers the freedom of irresponsibility, no room for objection is left. But in Hindu India, because the household is an essential element in its social structure, marriage is almost compulsory, like conscription in Europe on the threat of war."<sup>5</sup> This conception of marriage is sanctified by religion and custom, for as in ancient Egypt, Rome, and Greece, the gods are

<sup>2</sup>Wiesner, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup>Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Indian Ideal of Marriage*, in Keyserling's *The Book of Marriage*, p. 93, Cornwall Press Inc., N. Y., 1926.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-100.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 101. See also the account of the marriage of King Acropati's daughter, Savitri, as related in the *Mahabharata*.

pictured as having wives and children; and each householder yearns to have sons to inherit his estate and to conduct the religious ceremonies at his burial or cremation. Illustrative of this fact, a legend relates how, once upon a time, a young man, regarding his family responsibilities too lightly, put aside marriage and skipped over the *grihastha* or householder's period of life, and finally attaining to the *sanyasi* or ascetic stage of life, fared forth to seek spiritual peace. Peace he could not find, and one day while roaming disconsolately in the jungle, he was attracted to a mighty cavern in the earth by shrieks and groans. Drawing near, he found his departed ancestors dangling over the depths of this bottomless pit at the end of fragile grass ropes at which rats were gnawing. These tormented ancestors, amid their shrieks of terror and agony, informed him that their terrible condition was due to the fact that he was not bringing up a family of sons. They entreated him to forsake temporarily his ascetic quest for happiness, and return to his ancestral village, take unto himself a suitable wife, bring up a family, and thus free them from this curse. This he did to his own peace and to the relief of his departed relatives.<sup>8</sup> This philosophy of the individual's subordination also furnishes at least a partial explanation of child marriage which India has practiced for so long. Child betrothal and child marriage are thus a sort of insurance against either optional or enforced celibacy.

A second corollary that may be drawn from this philosophy of marriage is that choice of bride or husband is not for the individual but for the families of the "contracting" parties. As described elsewhere in this book, this custom leads to what westerners consider numerous quaint ceremonial practices. It also makes but little place for amorous courtship as is common in western countries. The dictum is, "marry at all events, and love later if possible."

A third corollary that may be logically drawn from this philosophy of the subordination of the individual in marriage is that the home and its furnishings are not to be looked upon as the legitimate facilities for the exclusive selfish enjoyment of the householder and his family. In fact, in line with Hindu custom, the home is not only the place of abode of the immediate family, but especially in the case of the joint-family, is the abode of numerous relatives as well. The home is also the place for the dispensing of charity to relative, beggar, *sanyasi*, or stranded traveller. This spirit of charity is supported, no doubt, by the communalistic theory and practice of landholding and village life described elsewhere in this book. "Therefore the home of the Indian has never

<sup>8</sup> Thurston and Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. I, pp. 224-5.



been looked upon as his castle, the place where he is lord and master."<sup>7</sup>

**The Family the Socio-Economic Unit.** We may well surmise from our previous discussions of the village and the caste that it is through the family that the individual is maintained physically and his fundamental vocational education secured. While vocations are limited to castes, the family is both the instrument for furnishing membership to the caste, and at least the elements of the education for village vocations.

Children begin many, perhaps most, of their caste-limited callings very young. In travelling throughout the country one may see very young children assisting with the herding, or weeding and other farm work; and particularly in southern India one may frequently see very small girls carrying about a sleeping infant. Mukerji, in his stories of *Ghond the Hunter*, and *Gay Neck*, relates how the father and the priest introduced the young lad into the nature lore of the jungle, and how this store of knowledge was frequently used to escape the attack of wild animals or to rid the village of ferocious beasts. The darzi at the open air shandy has not only his materials and equipment for making garments while the customer waits, but often as well, has a few boys who assist with the various phases of the work. And thus runs the story of apprenticeship education throughout the usual village vocations.

From the standpoint of sound pedagogy, probably but very little valid negative criticism can logically be made of this form of education. Within the child's mental range and the limits of his physical ability, learning "to do by doing," is a sound procedure. And learning by doing the actual necessary work of the world, rather than the artificial intellectual tasks of a protected school environment far removed from the actual situations of the outside world, is equally sound educational procedure. Furthermore, getting one's education as an integrated whole,—i. e., learning how to maintain one's health while learning a vocational process or a trade, learning the story of the human race while earning one's keep, the learning of family relationships and responsibilities by actually working in the field, shop, or home with one's parents, brothers and sisters,—is a sort of educational procedure that helps one to see life steadily and as a whole. Moreover, this sort of educational procedure gives the parents an excellent opportunity to make the home, in a real sense, an educational institution. In the case of the village peasants, this, of course, does not mean a literary type of education such as the term signifies to many parents in our

<sup>7</sup>Tagore, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

own country, for most of the adults of the villages are illiterate and there are but few books; but it is a type of education that prepares one to live in a tropical climate amid all the advantages and disadvantages that such a climate puts in the way of a people. It prepares one to live the subsistence sort of life generally so prevalent in Indian villages, where barter is yet the prevailing means of exchange, and most of the food, clothing, tools, etc., are either made in the home by the members of the family, or by village artisans.

In order to give a more concrete picture of the self-sufficient sort of family economy which constitutes the major education of the village youth, let us quote from Dr. Wiser's account of Karimpur: "Industrially, the family of Karimpur maintains much of its primitive importance. It has passed the period where the whole course of economic activity from production to consumption of all goods is restricted to the household. But this period has not been left far behind. The grains and pulses are carried through every stage from sowing the seed to eating the cooked products and to the storing of seed for the following year, by the family group. The tools required for the various processes are supplied, with very few exceptions by the village craftsmen. They, in turn, carry on their industries in family groups within the courtyard or a small front room of the paternal home, or just outside the wall. In the preparation of clothing there is greater delegation of activities to craftsmen outside the family. The cotton is grown, picked and ginned by members of the family, then given to the village *dhuna* for carding. The women of the family spin it, and the thread goes to the weaver who makes it into cloth. The product may be made into garments in the home, but it is usually handed over to the *darzi*. An increasing number of skirts and kurtas in the village are made of mill-made cloth."<sup>8</sup>

The rather restricted nature of each kind of work, the rather primitive methods of hand labor by which most of it, particularly on the farms and in village industries, is done, is conducive to the employment of children; yet it is probable that India is not exploiting her women and children in factories, in the mines, and on farms as much as some countries of the West have done. However, recent legislation affecting women and children prohibits, or otherwise limits, their activities in mining and other dangerous work. Such legislation, plus a certain amount of governmental factory inspection, it is said, have tended to lift the labor status of women and children to a position superior to that of China and

<sup>8</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *The Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 207.



Japan; and as the result of the agitation of a number of progressive men and women, it seems probable that the conditions of labor of women and children in factories will be steadily improved.<sup>9</sup>

The family is also the primary unit for much of the village worship. Probably most homes, however humble, have their shrines, the images of their gods, and perhaps most set lights aglow at night to keep out the evil denizens of the air that are supposed to seek rest indoors after dark.<sup>10</sup> The various formulae for appeasing the anger of the gods or for procuring the favors of the gods, the various methods of warding off the evil eye, the various charms for securing immunity from danger, as well as the vast body of nature lore, and the interesting and equally vast body of folklore which ties one firmly into the culture of the past, are taught, no doubt, principally at home, assisted to some extent by the priest, the astrologer, and the numerous magic men.

**Other Basic Concepts.** It is obvious that the group controls which subordinate and indoctrinate the individual in terms of family, caste, and village mores would logically tend to extend the family's influences yet farther than thus far described. In rounding out this phase of our discussion we should observe that these controls tend to make the family residentially fixed in the ancestral village, and the authority of parents permanent, regardless of the maturity or the marital status of the children. The residential permanency of families, as we have already noted in discussing the migration of village labor, has a bearing upon urban industrial conditions, and the continued exercise of authority over the children has a bearing upon family solidarity which will be discussed more fully later under the joint-family.

While it is normally expected, in most parts of India, that marriage results in transplanting the daughters, rather than the sons, into new homes, the daughters, once married, if dissatisfied, under certain conditions, may return to their parents. But this privilege, obviously, is not an advantage enjoyed by the married sons, unless they actually run away. An example of parental authority over a son, and escape from it by running away, is humorously related by Dr. Wiser, of a case in Karimpur. He writes: "During our past two years in this village only one son has run away from home to seek his fortune. It happened early in our stay, and just at that time one of us made a trip to [the city of] Cawnpore. The mother came to our tent bewailing her loss, and asking whither we had spirited her child. Someone had convinced her that we had taken him away. The 'child' proved to

<sup>9</sup>See appropriate sections of the Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV.

<sup>10</sup>Ayyar, P. V. J., *South India Customs*, pp. ix, 11.

be a husky youth of 22, with a wife. After a few months he returned, to the relief of the village mothers. But when asked where he had been and what he had been doing, he simply grinned and performed a brief nautch [dance]. More than this he refused to disclose, at least to his elders.<sup>11</sup>

### *Marriage and Divorce*

From the foregoing discussion of marriage among Hindus, one may surmise that these people consider marriage a sacrament which no one could lightly put aside. In fact, Hindus are so religious that practically all the routine of daily life may be regarded more or less a sacrament. This philosophy of marriage makes the reproduction of all living things the source of much wonder and speculation, which becomes integrated in their art and religious practices. For example, on many of the temples are carved figures of the human reproductive organs, and many of the more important temples have *Devadasi* or temple harlots. Some primitive tribes also practice phallic dances which are an orgy of sensuality.<sup>12</sup> That religion and custom uphold the importance of marriage probably accounts for the fact that practically all adult women who are not widows live in some form of wedded relationship with one or more men. So important is marriage to the social status and dignity of women, that among certain primitive tribes unmarried daughters, as in the case of dancing girls, have been ceremonially married to a tree, an idol, a flower, a sword, or a peacock in order to free them from the disgrace of celibacy as well as from certain entanglements of genuine marriage.

**Forms of Marriage.** While current educated Indian thought, perhaps, will almost unanimously support the idea of monogamy, there is a wide variety of practice permitting of plural wives (polygyny), plural husbands (polyandry), and concubinage. However, people of western countries hear very little about polygamy in India, except perhaps when a prince or maharajah adds to his harem a western wife. Among the Mohammedan element of the population, at least in certain sections, there is a common tendency toward plural wives, and the same is true of many tribes among the aborigines, as well as some of the Hindus.<sup>13</sup> Thus among the Savaras, a hill tribe in Ganjam and Vizagapatam, a man may have as many as three wives; or, if he is a man of importance he may

<sup>11</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *former. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>12</sup>See an account of the Savaras, Thurston and Rangachari, *former cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 315, and of the Devadasi, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 125-133; also Farquhar, J. N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, pp. 419-424.

<sup>13</sup>See references to Mohammedan marriages in the chapter on Islam in India.



have four.<sup>14</sup> For his first marriage, a man of this tribe may choose the woman he fancies; his other wives are perhaps her sisters or other women who may have come to him. Among these people, a woman may leave her husband whenever she pleases, and he cannot prevent her. Obviously, this is an easy and informal way of divorce. When a woman leaves her husband to join another man, the latter pays her former husband a buffalo or a pig.<sup>15</sup> Among the Yanadi, a dark-skinned people in the Telegu country, the marriage ceremony is no indispensable necessity, seduction and elopement are common occurrences, and divorces are easily obtained. Adultery is no serious offense, widows may live in concubinage, and pregnancy before marriage is no crime.<sup>16</sup> Among other tribes, such as the Vettuvans, an agricultural and hunting caste in Salem, Coimbatore, and Madura, premarital pregnancy is treated a little more seriously. Here the parents of an unmarried pregnant woman report the matter to the headman of the village, who convenes the council of the elders. This council endeavors to discover who the secret lover is, and if he is found and confesses, he is asked to marry the woman. After certain other rituals, including the taking of a few drops of blood from the woman's body, the pronouncement is made, "Free of guilt!" If the lover should be unwilling to marry her, he is thrashed and placed under a ban. If they are related to each other, they are both turned out of the caste.<sup>17</sup> Among the Raniyava of South Canara, women who are found guilty of adultery or of illicit intercourse before marriage are not allowed to wear bangles, nose-screws, or black bead necklaces, and are treated like widows; and men found guilty of seduction are not allowed to take part in caste council meetings.<sup>18</sup> In commenting upon the marriage situation in India, Farquhar says: "Every Hindu marriage is *in posse* polygamous. Though the great majority of Hindus are monogamous in practice, yet there is a law which allows a man to take a second wife if the first proves childless or quarrelsome; and from the earliest time until today, kings and wealthy men have been accustomed to marrying many wives."<sup>19</sup>

Among the Todas, a pastoral people in the Nilgiris country, polyandry, i. e., plural husbands, is practiced. When the girl thus becomes the wife of a boy, it is usually understood that she becomes the wife of his brothers also. When the husbands are not brothers, they are of the same clan. In the form of polyandry in

<sup>14</sup>Thornton and Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. VI, p. 214.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 423.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 400.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 244.

<sup>19</sup>Farquhar, J. N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 400, Macmillan, 1924.

vogue here, the "father" of the child is the man who performs a certain ceremony about the seventh month of pregnancy, in which an imitation bow and arrow are given to the woman. When the husbands are brothers, the oldest brother usually performs this ceremony.<sup>20</sup> Among the Kappiliyans of South India, a woman whose husband is too young to fulfill his duties is allowed to consort with his near relations and the children so begotten are treated as his.<sup>21</sup>

The marriage of widows, particularly in a great many of the Brahmin castes, is forbidden; but this is not true of all castes and tribes. When widow marriages are allowed, the ceremonies are usually very inexpensive and plain affairs, as compared with the first marriage of one of equal caste-rank and wealth. While *suttee*, i. e., the burning of the widow alive on the funeral pyre of her departed husband, has been forbidden by Government, the widow is often required to shave her head, give up her jewelry and, to all intents and purposes, become an outcaste. Among other castes and tribes this harsh treatment of widows is abated somewhat after a period of pollution is passed. For example: "Among the Toreyas of the Tamil districts of Coimbatore, when a man dies, his widow on the third, fifth, seventh, or ninth day thereafter, dressed in new clothes, and bedecked with ornaments and flowers, is taken to the burial ground with offerings of milk, ghi, tender cocoanut, camphor, etc. . . . The widow goes thrice around the grave, and seats herself near the head thereof. Her brother holds up her arms and one of her husband's male relations breaks off her bangles. She breaks and throws her tali on the grave with the flowers which adorn her. . . . She is rubbed with cow-dung and bathed. . . . [and] remains in seclusion for three months."<sup>22</sup> Among the Boyas, a caste in North Arcot, while widows may not marry or wear black bangles, there is nothing to prevent them from keeping house for a man and begetting children by him. In this case the couple would announce their intention of living together by giving a feast to the caste. If this formality was omitted, they would be regarded as outcastes until it was complied with.<sup>23</sup> And among the Savaras, a widow is considered bound to marry her husband's brother, or his brother's sons if he has no younger brothers.<sup>24</sup>

In more recent years, however, and within limited social areas, a new conception of marriage is slowly emerging. This is due, no doubt, to a number of causes, including contacts with

<sup>20</sup>Thurston and Bangachari, *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 142.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 217.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 181-182.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 206.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 315.



western influences, particularly the Christian missionaries, the increasing education of women, the swaraj movement, and other forces. Marriage, according to these newer ideas, is based on personal choice and social freedom, and the progress of the movement will be followed with great interest by students of Indian society.<sup>25</sup>

**Ceremonial in Marriage.** It seems clear that a people who are so favorably inclined toward marriage would also be inclined to celebrate it with elaborate ceremonials. This is the case, though because of the diverse social composition of the population and because of the policy of Government to interfere as little as possible with the customs of the people, there is a great variety in ceremonies of all kinds, including marriage ceremonies. As among western peoples, wealth, social position, local custom, etc., have something to do with the elaborateness of the ceremony; yet the love for ritual and the need for festive occasions to enliven the drab life of the village, all combine to make marriage an occasion for much formalized and costly social activity, regardless of caste or poverty.<sup>26</sup> Thus the ceremony in the remarriage of a widow, where such is allowed, may consist merely in informally joining a woman and a man and giving a feast to their caste. In the first marriage among the Raniyava in South Canara, the ceremony consists chiefly in pouring water over the united hands of those being married.<sup>27</sup> But among the higher castes, most of the marriages call for very elaborate ceremonies consisting of many performances extending over several days or even weeks, requiring the services of astrologers, philosophers, bards, and priests, and involving much feasting and the expenditure of large sums of money.

In writing upon the form of marriages taking place in Karimpur, Dr. Wiser states: "Marriage may be performed by three different types of ceremonies. The first is the *Byah*, where the bridegroom goes to the bride's house for the first and second ceremony. This cannot be used in widow remarriage. Second, the *Dola*, where the bride goes to the bridegroom's house for the first ceremony, and the groom goes to the bride's house for the second ceremony. Third, the *Dharauna*, used for widow remarriage, where the widow is brought in as a wife with the approval of the caste council.<sup>28</sup> According to some authorities the *Byah* marriage ceremony has fourteen important parts,<sup>29</sup> and another authority con-

<sup>25</sup>Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 470.

<sup>26</sup>See figures on the cost of marriages in the chapter on Farm Incomes and Standards of Living (Ch. XI).

<sup>27</sup>Thurston and Rangachari, *former cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 244.

<sup>28</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, pp. 217-18.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 218, quoting Blunt and Mrs. Stevens, *Rites of the Twice Born*. Oxford Press.

sulted gives some twenty pages, to a description of the details of marriages, and certain inter-caste variations therein, among the Brahmins of Southern India.<sup>20</sup>

Mukerji in describing his brother's marriage relates how the matchmaker attached to his family began to inquire of the various sorts of diseases with which members of the family in former days had been afflicted, and with this knowledge in hand how he went shopping about seeking a suitable maiden to become the bride, making similar inquiries about the families of such girls as he chose to consider. A suitable maiden having been tentatively selected, the matchmakers of the two families exchanged information so as to avoid "dangerous diseases" that might possibly be lurking in the families. This was followed by the young man's parents making a call upon the girl's family to discuss with them the desirability of the tentatively proposed marriage. This was followed by a formal call by the young man and his father to see the girl. The matter being favorably settled on this occasion, the young man's family, followed with a retinue of relatives, priests, the family matchmaker, astrologer, poet, and philosopher, paid the girl's family a visit which was the first of a long series of ceremonies. Previous to this visit, however, the astrologers of the two families had determined that the stars under which the couple were born were compatible, and had settled the hour for the marriage. At the time of the marriage proper, a procession accompanied the groom to the place where the altar fires were burning. There the groom stood while the bride was brought in, seated in a sandal-wood chair, carried by her four brothers. The seat was covered with beautiful lotus designs, which were symbolical. The bride, thus seated and veiled, was carried around the fire seven times; then it was the groom's turn to go around the sacred fire. That completed, the two stood facing each other; then the groom swore: "By my parents, by the deities of the family, by the one God, I will cherish and protect and love thee, and even if thou wert faithless to me, I would wait until the eternal self overcame the temporal self. What more shall I say? Not only in this incarnation but through all the incarnations to come, mayst thou be tied to me, as the beating is tied to the heart."<sup>21</sup> The girl repeated the same vow to the groom, then again they encircled the fire seven times. They were then asked for their final consent. A veil was put over their heads and they looked at each other under it for a brief time. This is known as the "consenting look". Beyond that neither could withdraw

<sup>20</sup> Thurston and Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. I, pp. 278-297.

<sup>21</sup> Mukerji, *Dhan Gopal, Caste and Outcaste*, p. 144.



without a divorce. The priest then asked them: "Do you swear after this look you are satisfied?" The answers both being in the affirmative, the elders arose, the boy and girl joined hands and said together: "Thy flesh on my flesh; thy hands on my hands; thy heart on my heart; and our two hearts fastened on the heart of God. Thus shall it be."<sup>32</sup> Two conch-shell bracelets, the symbol of unity, were then placed on the bride's hand, and this ended the ceremony proper. After the feasting, there was the matching of the philosophers of the two families in a silent contest of philosophical discussion carried on through pantomimes. For example, one philosopher raised two fingers and the other philosopher raised one, which meant, "You say God is two? I say God is one!"<sup>33</sup> Likewise the poets of the two families were matched in a contest, wherein one gave the other a word upon which to improvise, *ex tempore*, a couplet, or about which to compose highly florid phraseologies of a poetical nature. These contests were followed by drama and songs appealing strongly to the artistic senses. These were followed by considerable teasing and horseplay wherein the groom was asked embarrassing questions by the ladies. Before the festive days were over, there was a certain amount of visiting between members of the two families which was ended by the groom's mother handing the bride a key, symbolical of wifehood, motherhood, and womanhood. The final transference of the bride to her new home was carried out with an elaborate series of symbolical activities, terminating in the groom's parents taking a pilgrimage for a while so as to leave the young people somewhat to themselves while they were becoming adjusted to their new life together.

**Divorce.** Thus far, some account, rather incidentally, has been given of divorce in India. However, it is known that divorce, as a formal procedure in the civil courts, is rare, at least among the village masses. This is largely true because of the lack of formal civil regulation by Government covering such matters. Divorce, like marriage, is left pretty generally to the rules and customs of the various tribes and castes. But that there are frequent dissolutions of the marriage through abandonment on the part of the husband or wife, or through the performance of certain caste rites, or the payment of certain fines, or undergoing some minor social disability, cannot be doubted. Thus among Mohammedan and some Hindu tribes a husband can dismiss his wife by formal declaration, usually without legal recourse on the part of the wife. Among the Kappiliyans, a farming caste in Madu-

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

ra, a woman committing adultery outside the caste is expelled from the caste.<sup>24</sup> Among the Kondhs, a hunting tribe in Ganjam, divorce sought on the part of the husband is rare, but cases are known where the wife has sought and procured a divorce in order to establish a new alliance.<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Wiser in writing upon divorce in Karimpur states: "If a woman finds her husband or mother-in-law, or others with whom she has to live, intolerable, she may commit suicide, or she may run away. Although the husband has the privilege of setting his wife aside, a wife has this means of escape not provided by law. If she returns to her father's house and she is a member of a Sudra caste, it is possible for her father to arrange another marriage for her. The deserted husband is free to remarry. If the deserting wife has a son, she is obliged by the caste elders to leave him with his father's people. This requirement assures the fidelity of the wives who are mothers."<sup>26</sup> Thus it is observed that if some castes claim not to allow divorce, there is provided an informal means of escaping intolerable family conditions, while among others divorces are freely granted.<sup>27</sup>

Judged by the general lack of civil court procedures in divorce cases, the people of India do not seem to take such marital dissolutions as seriously as marriages and deaths, or as do people in most western countries. But even then, it is perhaps a question as to whether failures in marriage ending in dissolution by one method or another are as high in India as in some of the other countries of the Orient or the West.

### *The Joint-Family System*

Regardless of the form of marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, there is a form of family organization more or less unique to India, that needs to be described,—the joint-family system. There is a slight approach to this form of family organization in the *gross-familie* of certain western countries, but the similarities are not many, upon close comparison, as we may note in passing.

While the clan or village is still a common unit for the purpose of landholding in parts of India, the joint-family is also the unit for property holding and for the conduct of many social and economic functions for their members. However, certain students of Indian social economy believe that both of these systems are passing and that ultimately India will follow the social evolution

<sup>24</sup>Thurston and Rangachari, *former cit.*, Vol. III, p. 218.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 267.

<sup>26</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 221.

<sup>27</sup>Thurston and Rangachari, *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 262.



of the West by making the individual the unit for the holding of private property and of the social system.

The joint-family organization is more prevalent among the Hindus than the Mohammedans. It consists of a number of near relatives, usually from the male line (*agnate*), and their children, who live under the same roof and obtain their food from the same kitchen or *chulha*. It is usually organized with the oldest male member as the head. In this organization all property is held in common and all incomes are pooled for the use of the entire group. The rule is, from everyone according to his capacity, and to each one according to his needs. According to laws of inheritance in some localities, the major members of this organization, that is to say, those who have attained legal age of freedom, which is usually 18 among the males and 16 among the females, may seek a division of the property by process of a peaceful family council, or failing in that, by court procedure. Sometimes, even after the property has been divided, the organization may persist for social purposes. In such cases, for example, the head of the family may preside over the marriage ceremonies of his nephews. While the head of the joint-family usually exercises considerable authority, his authority is limited by that of the family council which may be called upon to dispose of matters of serious moment to the group.

In order to set forth objectively the joint-family as a socio-economic organization in normal life, let us describe an actual family unit in central India. The members and their incomes are as follows:

Eldest brother, a clerk, with a family of eight children; two children are in college, and two in high school; income .....	Rs. 60 per month
Second brother, unmarried, engaged in social service, but with an uncertain income; income about .....	Rs. 100 per month
Third brother, inspector of schools, four children; income.....	Rs. 500 per month
His wife, superintendent of schools; income.....	Rs. 200 per month
Fourth brother, acting as manager of the joint-family, a clerk, four children; income .....	Rs. 50 per month
Two widowed sisters who work away from home but keep up their connection with the family organization; net income for each about Rs. 20 per month, total.....	Rs. 40 per month
A number (probably eight or more) of dependent children of two dead sisters,—four in college and one daughter taking training as a nurse; no income.	
An aged mother and a number of other dependent rela- tives, some near and some distant, (exact number not learned); no income.	
Two employed servants, a man and a woman.	
Total number of persons in the joint-family, at least forty (probably more); total income.....	Rs. 950 per month <sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup>The information on the joint-family was largely obtained from Prof. P. D. Nair, of the Agricultural College, Nagpur. See Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, pp. 103, 104.

The incomes of all the earning members of this family go into a common fund, and, excepting the two widows away from home, all live under the same roof and receive their food from the same kitchen.

Certain advantages are claimed for the joint-family. First, the joint-family takes care of its own needy members, so that very few poorhouses are found in India. This practice delays the establishment of certain charitable institutions, such as leper asylums now supplied by Government and Christian missions. Second, the authority exercised over the children by all the adults, and the living together in large numbers, work toward the inculcation of cooperation and socialized living. Moreover, all the children are assured a better opportunity for an education and a start in life. Third, it prevents, or defers, excessive fragmentation of land. Fourth, it provides for early marriages, in that the young people do not have to postpone marriage on account of inability to get an economic start in life, as is true in most western countries.

Certain disadvantages, likewise, are claimed against the joint-family system. First, there is frequently considerable quarrelling among the numerous wives in the group; and there is often jealousy, especially against the family of the manager, if the wife and the children of the latter, because of their position, become arrogant. Second, according to Professor Saunders, the village and the joint-family systems discourage initiative and thrift on the part of the individual members. Third, the joint-family tends to residential overcrowding, and hence, insanitary conditions of living. And fourth, the joint-family arrangement often makes it difficult for husbands and wives to enjoy a normal sex life, much less the full assumption of control and responsibility in the bringing up of their family. Many careful students of this system of family life heartily condemn it, and it seems that in practice it is finding increasingly less favor among the Indians themselves. Such organizations as this tend to make society intensely conservative and difficult of penetration by Christian missions or other similar social agencies.



## Chapter IX

### THE WOMEN OF INDIA

In the chapters on the caste system and the family, the reader has already received some insight into the social status of the women of India. But there are other questions of interest about the women of this country, upon which, no doubt, he would like further information. We shall anticipate some of these questions and point the answers toward a better understanding of the cultural and the social status of the women of present-day India. Toward that end, we shall present the development of this chapter under the following topical headings: dress and ornamentation, work, the home and household equipment, and general social status. In the discussions which follow, the reader should call to mind the racial and the cultural heterogeneity of this great country, and the difficulties this heterogeneity presents to a dispassionate and fair treatment of the subject of this chapter. And in following these descriptions, he may well ask himself these questions: Which of these practices and customs, under Indian conditions, are detrimental to the highest interests of the women and the home, and which are harmless or even beneficial? What counterparts to these customs and practices can be found, in some form, in the customs and the practices of American women?

#### *Women's Dress and Ornamentation*

**Dress.** The *sari* is the outer garment typical of the women of most parts of India, and is usually worn with a sleeveless short jacket. It is a single piece of cloth varying from five to seven or eight yards in length and a yard or more in width. Usually, among the wealthy classes, the *sari* is made of silk and is highly ornamented with fine needlework; and it is said that one well acquainted with Indian women's dress can tell by the ornamentation of a *sari* from what part of the country the woman comes. Of course, among the poor, and especially for hard outdoor work, the *sari* is nothing but a plain piece of cheap cotton cloth.

There are many variations in the manner of wearing the sari. Usually it is put on by fastening a portion of one end, skirt-fashion, about the waist of the wearer, then the remainder is wound around the body and caught up over her left shoulder so as to form, out of the last yard or so, a cloak to cover the shoulders, or is brought up over the head to form a covering for both the head and shoulders. While this method of wearing it is by far the commonest, it is by no means the exclusive method. Among women in some parts of the country, the sari is usually brought up over the right shoulder; among the higher classes of the Burmese, the women wear a sort of loose skirt and a separate outer jacket; while among some of the tribes of Malabar many of the women wear no covering whatever on the upper part of their bodies. Nevertheless, a sari put on with care has a flowing, artistic appearance that is very pleasing to the eye.

The younger children of both sexes in the villages in the warmer parts of India are often seen running about naked, and the men in these areas, especially the coolies, wear little more than a scanty loin cloth. It seems obvious that the mode of dress of India is consistent with the torrid climate there. But it is to be noted that the educated classes, particularly the men, are beginning to put aside the flowing garments traditional to the East for clothing of western style; and for climatic and social reasons, the male Indian students in American and European universities almost universally adopt, in whole or in part, western modes of dress.

It is usual for the women, as well as the men and children, to go barefoot in most parts of India. For the masses this is true of all India, except to a limited extent in the northern parts of the Punjab and other provinces lying in the northern part of the realm. Here, for a short period in the winter, the weather is rather cool so that some form of footwear is often worn by at least certain classes. However, in Darjeeling up among the foot-hills of the Himalayas, during the month of April, I saw numbers of coolie men and women going about, nonchalantly, barefoot in the slush of a hail storm that covered the streets for several days. In parts of northern India leather shoes are worn by many, and the same is true of the educated classes throughout the country. Sometimes sections of cast-off automobile tires are fashioned into crude coverings for the feet, and leather sandals are worn by some people throughout India. But after making all these exceptions, it must be observed that India, on the whole, is a "barefoot" country.

While going barefoot, on the whole, is consistent with the climate of the country, particularly during the rainy season which requires much wading about in mud and water, the practice has



certain disadvantages. Going barefoot facilitates the spread of hookworm, and to some extent guinea worm and a number of skin diseases. Because most Indian villages do not have adequate disposal of sewage, the hookworm parasites become attached to the bare feet of the passers-by and then proceed through the tissues of their bodies to their digestive tracts where they linger as internal parasites. The people suffering from hookworm become anaemic, listless, weak, and incapable of effective labor. In some provinces it is said that practically all the people are infested with this terrible parasite, and thus misery and pauperism are greatly accentuated. Adequate sewage disposal, or the wearing of shoes, would tend to prevent the spread of the hookworm.

**Jewelry.** But going barefoot gives the women of India the opportunity to wear and display, in an ostentatious manner, a great deal of jewelry. It is usual for the women of India, regardless of class or caste, to wear a number of anklets and toe rings, varying in value and number somewhat according to the father's and the husband's wealth. Likewise bracelets for the arms, and rings for the ears and the nose, are worn in profusion. I have seen the wives of money-lenders wearing four or five heavy silver anklets on each leg, with each of their ten toes covered with heavy silver rings of varying patterns, so that as they walked along on the streets they seemed to have to goose-step in order to carry the weight of the jewelry; and the noise made by the jewelry sounded very much like the clanking of the fetters of a chain gang of prisoners passing on the doublequick. Certain of the hill tribe women of Burma, especially on holiday occasions, add to their jewelry a number of metallic neck rings. Often in such cases a large ring rests upon the shoulders, and smaller rings are added so as to make a graduated series reaching up to the ears, making difficult the turning of the head. Even the poorest farm-labor coolie women will have at least one anklet and a toe ring or two, and may also have a large ear disc the size of the bottom of a small tin can attached to a hole in the lobe of one ear, while a sizeable disc can rest upon the lobe of one of her nostrils, and a ring pierce the septum of her nose. Evidently to be caught without at least some jewelry on the person would scandalize the average village woman of India.

The teeming millions of the Orient, for ages past, have absorbed the surplus silver metal of the commercial world; for most of the jewelry worn here is made of silver and gold. This tended, until recently, to furnish a fairly satisfactory market for the surplus silver metal throughout the world; but as the result of the *swaraj* movement in India, and tariffs and other trade barriers adopted by other countries directly or indirectly interested in In-

dian commerce, the flow of silver metal to India has slackened somewhat. No doubt this is a factor in disturbing the price of silver, and figures in the economic depression now generally prevailing in many countries throughout the world.

When a girl is married, it is customary for her father to endow her with a great deal of jewelry, and to spend large sums on the festivities of the wedding. Often the father will go into debt so deeply at the marriage of a daughter as never to be able to pay the amount borrowed; so one can see a reason why the presence of a large number of female children in a family is sometimes looked upon with apprehension. The bestowal of jewelry upon a daughter at the time of her marriage has a trace of justice in it, however, because of the fact that among most of the peoples of India it is only the sons who inherit property directly from the father; yet this benefit to the sons may be offset also by the inheritance of the debts which the father may have made. The dowry, appearing in the customary form of jewelry for the personal adornment of a girl at the time of her wedding, gives her a certain amount of protection from her husband. If the husband should become intolerable, the wife may leave him, taking on her person, perhaps, the major portion of the wealth of the household. The jewelry of Indian women is usually highly ornate, containing symbols to ward off the evil eye or to bring good luck. Often among the wealthier classes it is studded with precious stones.

But in this connection we should pause to note how such natural wealth as precious stones has been tied to sentimental occurrences connected with Indian history. You may recall that India, historically, has been renowned for her precious stones. The corals of India are made famous in story and song, while the diamond mines of Golconda are equally well known. Only recently, while travelling in South India, I chanced upon a young Englishman on his way to Kolar to work in the gold mines, lured there, no doubt, by the reputed wealth of the Golconda Mines located in that region. The great Mogul stone presented to Emperor Shah Jahan, and the Kohinoor stone that passed through many hands finally to Queen Victoria (1850), Indian in origin, have become almost mythical.

But Indian leadership in wealth in precious stones is becoming past history. The major traffic in the precious stones of the world has passed from India to Africa and other countries, so that Indian wealth and economic activity today have become largely agricultural in nature. This being true, and the masses being the victims of grinding poverty, the continued investment of a great deal of the wealth of the country in jewelry for the personal adornment of the women is entirely out of harmony with the country's



greatest needs, and no doubt becomes one of the chief sources of economic waste and depression. Yet this situation may not be so bad as it first appears, since very often the woman's jewelry is the bank of the family, and at times of stringency is exchanged for necessities.

### *Women's Work*

As with the women's dress and personal adornment, there is considerable variation in women's work throughout India. Of course, among the wealthy, as in countries of the West, women generally do very little useful work; but that applies to but a small percentage of the women of India, for the masses of India are poverty-stricken. Among some castes the seclusion of women prevents them from engaging in work outside the home; yet generally, among the masses, women engage in heavy physical labor of all kinds open to their respective castes, so that throughout the teeming masses of India the woman's lot is hard indeed (see Chapter III).

**The Nature of Women's Work.** In most parts of India women do a great deal, if not most, of the heavy farm work requiring much bending, squatting, and tiresome repetition of movements. Since practically all of the farming of India is of the hand type, the women and children are often grossly exploited in the performance of farm labor. When noting a group of squatting coolies cutting small grain or sorghum with the little hand sickles, or harvesting potatoes or peanuts with small hand tools, or transplanting rice seedlings, you may well guess that most of them will be women. The men seem to do the plowing, the carting on the road, the driving of bullocks on the threshing floor, and the drawing of water for irrigation,—in fact those types of labor involved in driving a team; and men often engage in carrying bundles of grain from the fields. But in many sections the women seem to do the major portion of the really hard outdoor work. Even in the construction of buildings, the women often carry most of the brick, mortar, mud, and lumber; and in road construction, women are frequently found breaking stone, and carrying earth in baskets on their heads, while their children may be asleep in the shade, or "crying their heads off." In parts of North India, women do most of the portering about the railway stations. In Darjeeling, I was astonished at the size of loads carried by the women. For example, a small woman weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, by means of a head strap, would walk off up the mountain carrying on her back a large trunk of twice her weight! When on our way to Calcutta, a group of Darjeeling coolie women carried our baggage to the station. One woman had balanced on her back a couple of heavy suitcases harnessed to her

head-band, carried a grip in one hand and a good-sized baby on her other arm! She pattered along steadily as if she did not mind the load at all.

While outdoor labor by women may be a healthy corrective of the dark and insanitary hovels in which many of them live, it is obvious that their hard labor is causally related to the high infant mortality rate and the unhealthful and unsightly house surroundings so characteristic of village India. A change in the social and economic status of village women that will result in giving them more time for home-making and child-rearing, and the health and the education for accomplishing such worthy tasks, will be one of the most important things that can be accomplished for the social welfare of India.

Leaving out of consideration the work of employed servants, most of the household work of the masses, as in the West, is done by the women and children. The methods employed are primitive and in most parts of the country have changed but little in hundreds of years. The women, by the use of crude hand mills and the pestle and mortar, grind practically all the grain used for food by the family. The visitor in India frequently may hear, for a period of time at or soon after daybreak, the continuous thud of the pestles in the near-by huts grinding the grain for the day. Also, the women collect the cow dung and prepare it for fuel; they do most of the family garden work; much of the stock herding, and practically all the cooking. However, most of the garment-making is done by the men *darzis* (garment makers); and such shoes as are worn are made by special village shoemakers. The pottery, the metal vessels used in cooking, and the scant furniture found in the average home, as well as the clothing and other articles used by the family, are made by special caste groups, and the work is mostly done by the men. As the result of the work of the Christian missions and other agencies, women are beginning to do a certain amount of lace-making, sewing, fine needlework, weaving, and other work, heretofore, in most of India, done almost exclusively by the men. As a result, some of the vocational schools are being designed to introduce women to these activities. Nevertheless, nearly all the sewing classes we visited among the Indian schools recently were attended by boys only.

Among the employed household servant classes, there is a different story as to the division of work between the sexes. There may be women who are employed as cooks and butlers in private homes, but we have never seen any thus employed. Cooking, the serving of food, furnishing the house with water, gardening, driving the family car, and a number of other forms of employed domestic service, even most of the making of beds, are done by the men.



The personal care of children, the cleaning of the premises, including the disposal of night soil, the care of persons afflicted with certain illnesses, and many other tasks regarded as more or less degrading, are usually done by the women. But in whatever type of service employed, the caste system mechanically limits the type of one's occupation, even if the employment should be only part-time and not sufficient to keep the employee's family above starvation. The change in employment or residence of an average European family in India, or Indian family of moderate circumstances, means a period of suspense for the servants. The latter seem absolutely helpless to adjust themselves to new employment, unless it be of the same sort previously followed. On numerous occasions, while waiting for trains at railway stations, I have been accosted by men who knew a little English who wanted to become my personal servant or valet. These men will do only this sort of work, and will go without employment altogether rather than do farm work, or work on road construction.

### *The Home*

In the chapter on the village, some attention was given to the physical characteristics of the villager's homes; but logic calls for a further consideration of that subject here, even at the risk of a certain amount of repetition. Our discussion of the Indian home here is to show how it affects women's work and how it reveals women's social status.

**The Materials of Home Construction.** The materials out of which homes are constructed throughout India vary somewhat with the locality, but the material used in most village house construction is mud or adobe.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the hut is made of brush woven together in the appearance of a tent; and sometimes among the poorer people their protection is only a tree for cover and a straw or reed mat set up to break the force of the wind. This is poor protection during the rainy season. The masses throughout village India, however, for the most part, construct the walls of their homes of mud, or sun-dried mud bricks; and they make the roof out of straw, palm-leaf thatch, or country-made tile. These huts usually have only earth floors, which are cleaned on occasion by a treatment of watered cow-dung. It is said that this treatment acts as an antiseptic, and also closes the pores of the earthen floors. Sometimes the floors are raised a little for protection during the rainy season; and in low-lying villages, a boat is counted as standard equipment for homes during the rainy season. In some of the high caste Hindu

<sup>1</sup>See Wiser, Charlotte V. and William H., *Behind Mud Walls*, Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930.

villages and wealthier Mohammedan villages, better houses are constructed out of burnt bricks; and in the cities, brick and stucco, and among the wealthy, even granite and marble, are used in house construction, which make these cities appear very much like western cities. But among the 700,000 villages of India, which contain 90 per cent of the entire population, mud is the most common material for house construction (see Figs. VII and VIII).

While mud walls, unprotected by coping on the top, often crumble and spring apart during the rainy season, if well made and protected from the weather, prove very satisfactory. The thick earthen walls are not only cheap to construct, but are impervious to the winds and are heat-resistant. Thus houses, if built with high ceilings and well ventilated, are fairly cool, even in the hottest weather. Moreover, such building material is resistant to white ants. These insects are a pest to most of India in that they honeycomb all dead wood and lumber with which they come in contact.

There are certain customs in the plans of houses that reveal something of the social side of family life, especially as it applies to the work of women. For example, practically no village houses have chimneys. Often the smoke from the kitchen pours up through the crevices of the roof in such a manner as to cause a newcomer to fear that the house is on fire. But all the cooking is not done indoors. In the open courtyard there is usually a *chulha*, or especially prepared clay or brick oven for cooking during good weather, and water is often heated in discarded oil or gasoline cans suspended over a fire in this courtyard.

The few windows that are found in the middle-class and better homes are usually glassless. In order to keep out intruders iron or wooden bars are often inserted in the walls so as to cover the window openings. Shutters or heavy curtains are usually adjusted to keep out the sun. Thus, as shown more fully in other chapters, it appears that the materials used in house construction, and the plans of the houses are consistent with the climatic conditions and the economic status of the country. And the cost of building a house is not great enough to interfere seriously with the marriage of the average villager, as is true of certain classes in western countries who defer marriage in order to accumulate wealth, or to acquire an education, or to do other things supposed to contribute to a high standard of living.

**The Home also a Barn.** The huts of many of the poorer villagers are also supposed to serve as a barn or a fold for livestock during the night, as well as a domicile for the family. Owing to the prevalence of numerous predatory wild animals in this country, the



livestock is brought into the villages every evening, and is housed either in the one or two rooms constituting the owners' homes, or in corrals at the rear of these homes. As one may well expect, this practice adds to the problems of village sanitation; but it also shows how closely the livestock of India is associated with the lives of her people.

**Home Furnishings.** The furnishings of the average village home are few and simple. Even a house that from the exterior might appear to be a rich man's home, upon entrance, will probably seem to the visitor bare and unkempt. Most village houses have few, if any, chairs or tables, and particularly among the poorer masses homes will probably not have chinaware, beds, dressers, or many other kinds of furniture ordinarily found even in the neediest American homes. India is a nation of squatters and has little use for chairs or benches in her homes, schools, temples, or churches. There may be one or more *charpoys*, a sort of low wooden bed with rope or tape "springs," without mattress or cover, upon which people may sit during the day and sleep during the night. In many of the mission schools we visited, the furnishings were equally scant, there being no desks, chairs, or beds,—merely small mats for the children to sit on in the schoolroom during school hours, and small straw mats that could be laid side by side in rows around the verandah for beds at night, and rolled up and put away so the room or verandah might be used for other purposes during the day. The bare floor in the poorer homes is usually one's bed, and his cover is usually a light cotton cloth, or even one of the cloths carried on his person as a part of his clothing. The "kitchen stove" may be merely stones arranged for holding up a kettle, or baked mud arranged for the introduction of fuel below and the support of one or more cooking vessels on top.

The cooking utensils of the poorer village homes usually include a metal frying pan or two, an iron pot, a few wooden or metal spoons, a few knives, a number of earthen jars for holding water and storing food materials, and possibly a few brass vessels. Wooden or cheap china plates may be found in some homes, but among the poorer people rice is usually served merely on broad leaves and conveyed to the mouth with the bare fingers. The same way of serving food is also usual among the wealthier and the better educated classes, as well. Sometimes the cooking is done outdoors amid the hubbub of numerous passersby and loafers, livestock, stray dogs, and chattering monkeys. It is not an uncommon sight to see someone kneading dough on a board or broad leaf outdoors, or placing over a fire a vessel of dampened string beans to be steamed. The furnishing of wealthier homes, of course, is more

elaborate, and often is patterned, in whole or in part, along western lines.

**The Diet.** The food habits of most orthodox caste Hindus are limited to a vegetarian diet. Some outcastes, low castes, and most Mohammedans will eat some kind of meat; but the cow to the Hindu is a very sacred animal, so beef is generally not eaten by Hindus. Likewise, the Mohammedans tabu the consumption of hog meat. Most of those who can get it, both Hindus and Mohammedans, will drink milk, and eat *ghī* (clarified butter) and curds, but these articles of food are so scarce as to be of small account in the dietary of most of the poorer people. Thus there is much malnourishment here, both on account of too small an amount of food and on account of a diet lacking in animal fats, proteins, and vitamins.

The thing about Indian food that usually impresses the average westerner is the presence of curry. This is a seasoning mixture made of hot peppers, pungent spices and oils, sour tamarinds, onions, garlic, and other ingredients. It is often very hot, so that one unused to its presence in his rice is apt to "eat it and weep." It is said that because of the excessive use of strong curry, the Indians are prone to have stomach ulcers and other digestive troubles.

### *General Social Status*

**Marriage.** The social status of the women of India is revealed by almost everything thus far said about them. But marriage, with all the social factors connected therewith, is perhaps one of the best reflectors of the social status of Indian women. But Indian marriage, however, has what appears to the westerner many paradoxes. In the first place, as previously stated, even though it has general public approval, marriage is usually not a matter of free choice between the bride and groom. Children may even be betrothed before they are born; and whether married as infants or adults, people are usually united as the result of the jockeying of the fathers, the village matchmakers, and the village astrologers.<sup>2</sup> Over all is placed the unbending and authoritative rule of caste law. In many tribes the astrologer, alone, may prohibit a marriage if he thinks the stars are not in proper conjunction,—which may mean, if his fees do not seem adequate. In the second place, even though marriage has a fervent religious sanction, it seems to be also a convenient vehicle for the satisfaction of lust. Thus the practice of plural marriages and concubinage in some sections is fairly frequent among those financially able to support more than one woman;

<sup>2</sup>See Zinnand, *Savel, India*, Longmann's, Green & Co., 1922, Ch. VI, *India's Child Brides*.



and among some tribes, if his wife should not please him, the husband may divorce her by formal declaration. Moreover, it is said that marriage may be contracted in some primitive tribes for a period of time, at the expiration of which the parties are free to rewed. There is also a great deal of prostitution here, especially in the urban areas, augmented no doubt by the lack of adequate social adjustments to industrial conditions. Phallic or sex dances are engaged in on certain festive occasions, and it is common for important temples to retain as part of their permanent equipment a number of young women as harlots. However, under the leadership of a number of progressive Indian women intellectuals, a strong movement has been launched to uproot this practice. In Madras, it is said, largely under the aggressive leadership of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, a leading woman of that Presidency, legislation has been passed to abolish this system in Madras.<sup>4</sup> The health of the wife, the poverty and size of the family, and other prudential considerations that should enter into the sex life of classes capable of self-support and disciplined behavior, do not seem to be important considerations in the domestic life of the average Indian villager. The same, perhaps, can be said of the poorer classes in other countries. In America, research has shown that the size of families and the size of incomes are negatively related; that is to say, as a rule, the bigger the families the smaller the incomes of the fathers.<sup>5</sup> Thus India has one of the highest birth-rates in the world and also one of the highest death-rates.<sup>6</sup>

✓ As in most modern societies, India has a double standard of sex morals.<sup>6</sup> The result is that men have more personal liberty "to do wrong." Thus sex offenses committed by women, as a rule, are looked upon as of greater social concern than similar offenses committed by men; and in some tribes a husband convinced of his wife's infidelity may cut off her nose as a reproach, or even kill her, though this does not often occur.

✓ While the Government has practically put an end to suttee, and has reduced infanticide, widowhood in India is yet a sad condition for women. As explained in a former chapter, widows generally suffer personal afflictions at the hands of custom, such as having their heads shaved, their jewelry taken from them, and being con-

<sup>4</sup>The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 474. For an extended treatment of temple harlots, see Thurston and Rangachari, *The Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II, pp. 125 to 153, The Dera-Dasi. For an extended review of current steps to uproot it, see Mrs. Sarangadhar Das's, *A Marriage to India, or her Purdah*, a more recent book.

<sup>5</sup>The *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. CXLII, No. 221, May 1929, pp. 133-146.

<sup>6</sup>For comparative figures on birth- and death-rates among a number of leading countries of the world, see the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 475, 487. See also appropriate sections of Thurston and Rangachari, *Ibid.*

signed to the existence of outcastes. The implication is that the widow, somehow, is to blame for her husband's death; but the philosophical Hindu may explain the practice of suttee and the social degradation of widows as a practical recognition of the sanctity of marriage and the symbolism of a unity between man and wife that death cannot sever. However, widowers usually do not suffer such social disabilities and may re-marry. As a matter of policy, Government has not interfered much with tribal customs of marriage. The most important attempted interruption of marriage customs by Government was the Sarda Act which was passed by the Central Government (1930) under the advocacy of the Indian liberals of the Assembly, forbidding the marriage of girls under 14 and boys under 18 years of age. Though this gesture of governmental interference in tribal and caste customs concerning marriage was motivated by high purposes, this Act is very unpopular, and is broken by the masses with impunity.<sup>7</sup>

In order to note the conditions this Act was aimed to improve, we point to the 1921 Census, which shows that eight and one-half million girls of India were married before they reached the age of 15. And Zimand reports that among infant girls under five, fifteen in a thousand in 1921 were either married or widowed. Though the Act has not had time to work important changes in such degrading conditions, it is said by close observers that but little improvement of the child marriage evil can be noted over 1921 conditions. Evidently statutory law here, as elsewhere in the world, makes a poor showing when it runs counter to the deep-set mores of the masses. But however much we may deplore child marriage in India, we should not forget that some of our own states in America permit girls as young as 12 to marry with parental consent, and there is generally a growing trend toward younger marriages in this country.<sup>8</sup> However, in comparison, the situation in India, to some extent, is ameliorated by the fact that girls in tropical countries mature somewhat earlier than girls in temperate climates.

It should be observed further that marriage in India is not always equivalent to cohabitation, and there is usually a clear distinction between betrothal and actual marriage. While betrothal among some tribes and castes is almost equivalent to marriage, among others it is merely a forerunner of marriage, which may take place even years later, especially if the bride has not reached puberty. Among some classes, if the bride is very immature, she may be allowed to live with her own parents for a time before joining her husband in his ancestral residence or new place of abode. Yet fre-

<sup>7</sup>India in 1930-31, pp. 121, 460.

<sup>8</sup>Zimand, *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 109, 110; U. S. Census 1930: Richmond and Hall, Russell Sage Foundation Report on Child Marriages, 1923.



quently infants are betrothed and married, sometimes a girl child to a man old enough to be her grandfather. Many pitiful stories are told of how little girls are sometimes torn away from their mothers to begin a sex life which their immaturity wholly unfits them to enter. However, this age-old custom is meeting a growing resistance from within the social order of the country. This fact is attested especially by the aggressive efforts of the All-India Women's Conference, composed of women from almost all social classes and creeds. This conference grew out of an All-Mohammedan Women's Conference convened by the late Begum of Bhopal in 1914, and numerous subsequent conferences on educational reform and other subjects held throughout the empire. In 1927, the first All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform was held at Poona. This conference and subsequent conferences have considered such social reforms as the improvement of educational advantages in general, and for women in particular, the abolition of child marriage and purdah, the securing of women's rights in inheritance and other civil rights, and questions having to do with social justice and national welfare.<sup>2</sup> Though there are strong bonds of philosophy, custom, and religious sanction which support early marriages, there is growing up among a small group of educated women backed by men like Mr. Gandhi and the poet Tagore, a determined sentiment toward the abolition of child-marriage. This movement is augmented by the teaching of Christian missionaries, and within a few generations may grow strong enough to greatly affect marriage, even in this slow-moving land bound by the customs of centuries. Already, it is stated by some observers, there is a distinct tendency among the higher castes and the educated classes to postpone marriage until physical maturity is fairly reached.

**The Property Rights of Women.** There is considerable variation throughout the country as to women's rights to own and control property. Speaking in general, it has long been the custom for real estate, if not practically all personal property, at the death of the owner, to revert to the sons only. The complexity of the subject of inheritance under Hindu law was discussed in the chapter on Indian Government and need not be developed further here. A widow is sometimes permitted a limited lifetime interest in a dead husband's estate, but as a rule, the only property women can really claim as their own is their jewelry and other individual gifts denoting the esteem of the giver. The property of childless wives usually belongs to their husbands, unless they are married by rites not countenanced by Hindu law. In that case their property reverts

<sup>2</sup>For a very good account of current movements in suffrage and social work, women in the nationalist movement, etc., see Das, Mrs. Sarangadhar, *Purdah*, The Vanguard Press, 1932.

to their own parents. At a mother's death, it is customary for her personal belongings to go to her children.<sup>10</sup>

**Purdah.** *Purdah*, or the seclusion of women, has long been practiced in India. Its origin is not fully known, but some commentators think it was first practiced by Hindus to protect their women from the Mohammedan invaders, though it is known that Mohammedan countries, too, for centuries have secluded their women. Some ascribe the origin of the practice of child marriage to the same purpose. Others see in *purdah* the desire to keep womankind pure, and thus sanctify it with high motives. Yet others see it as a gesture to an overworked sex consciousness. Expressing this point of view, Dr. Wiser writes: "With such emphasis upon sex there is little opportunity for companionship either outside or inside the home. The men avoid their women folk, and companionship between husband and wife could be more general if there was less emphasis on sex."<sup>11</sup> But whatever its origin, *purdah* has long been practiced in India by both Hindus and Mohammedans, though more among the latter; and its effects upon the health of women, particularly among the poor in crowded areas, has generally been bad. Aside from matters of the personal health of women practicing *purdah*, this form of seclusion tends to withhold women from educative contacts with the outside world, and works toward extreme conservatism in family life. In the observance of *purdah*, women themselves are usually most insistent.<sup>12</sup>

While only certain classes practice *purdah* in its extreme form, there is today a distinct movement toward loosening its restrictions. The *burqah*, or shroudlike garment so characteristic of Moslem women in seclusion, the veil, and the closely curtained windows of the home, the train, or the tonga, are being slowly put aside. Reform societies, often led by aggressive educated women, are demanding the social freedom of women. Christian missionaries have long been teaching the social injustice of *purdah*, and the swaraj movement has given democratic principles the opportunity to appeal to the masses, even to the women in seclusion. The swaraj movement of 1930-31 brought many women from seclusion into public affairs in the picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops, etc. A missionary states: "I myself saw men and women arrested and awaiting trial confined in the same room. Such women as the daughter of Mr. Natarajan, Editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*,

<sup>10</sup>Cambridge History of India. Vol. I, pp. 287, 292.

<sup>11</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 215. For a further account of the seclusion of women, see Mazumder, N. N., *A History of Education of Ancient India*, pp. 10-14, The Macmillan Co., Ltd., Calcutta, 1918. See also Das, Mrs. Saran-gadhar, *Purdah*.

<sup>12</sup>See India in 1930-31, pp. 156, 156, 161; also The Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry Vol. IV, pp. 469, 472, 520.



have great influence in destroying the social restrictions of women." That reform, particularly in the cities and among educated classes, has already gone far, cannot be doubted; but persons well acquainted with the psychology of Indian village life cannot be very sanguine that the freedom of women from seclusion will be largely attained in the villages in the near future. The social emergence of women will come about slowly and in step with a number of other national reforms affecting marriage, caste, education, and other current problems. This will be true particularly among the masses in the villages who are sequestered from contact with the outside world; and among some of the women of higher social levels who proudly keep strict purdah as a social distinction, these reform movements, for a long time to come, will probably make but little visible headway.

In conclusion, by reading between the lines, we may be able to arrive at some fairly definite ideas as to the social status of the women of present-day India. Granting that the mother in the average Indian home has great influence, it is yet a question in the minds of many whether the women of the masses of India, on the whole, really occupy a social status equal to that of the women of China, or any other country of the Orient, or of the West; but judging by American standards, it must be conceded that their social status is pitifully low. Even in Turkey since 1922, a new social freedom and a new political democracy, including the women of that country, have arisen, almost as by magic, that the women of the masses of India, as yet, know almost nothing about. But among the educated Indian women, there are active leaders who sense the social inferiority of the women of that country and its debasing influence upon both the women and the country as a whole. These women, supported by Christian missionaries and certain other reform agencies, are clamoring for the education of women generally, for the abolition of the marriage of young children, for the restriction of the marriage of lepers and others hopelessly dependent upon society, and for the adoption of other social and political reform measures that will tend to give the womanhood of that country the personal recognition and the social freedom enjoyed by women in the more progressive countries of the West. It is too early to inventory fully the results of the efforts of these women and their supporters, but the writer thinks he can see on the distant horizon a small cloud of hope, even the size of a man's hand, that may ultimately become a storm, or more happily, a refreshing shower that will bring in its wake a happier, a more intelligent, and a more favorable recognition of the womanhood of this ancient and interesting land.



FIG. XII. AGRICULTURAL METHODS (A). 1. Livestock being assembled of a morning, later to be herded during the day on the waste lands outside the city, Nagpur; 2. Cattle tramping out grain on a threshing floor, Ankleswar; 3. Harvesting wheat, Allahabad.





**PART III**

**ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES**





## Chapter X

### INDIAN AGRICULTURE: THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

#### *The Dominance of Agriculture*

**The Increasing Importance of Agriculture.** One of the most important facts regarding Indian social economy is that India is a land of farm villages. There are huge cities and congested industrial centers, but 90 per cent of the people live in villages, of which there are estimated to be about 700,000 scattered throughout this great sub-continent.

As in the past, agriculture is the most important occupation in Indian villages. However, recent trends have been toward the increase in the importance of agriculture and the concentration of the people upon the land. The following figures collected from the Census Reports of India will illustrate this fact:<sup>1</sup>

#### TRENDS IN THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

Years	Proportion of the total population directly dependent upon agriculture
1891	61.0 per cent
1901	66.0 " "
1911	71.0 " "
1921	72.8 " "

Thus about three-fourths of the people of India derive their living directly from agricultural pursuits, while no other single industry supports as many as three per cent of the inhabitants. The increasing predominance of the agricultural population is also emphasized by the extremely slow growth of the urban population. During the thirty years between 1891 and 1921, the city population increased by less than one per cent, and that increase occurred largely at the expense of the smaller places.

<sup>1</sup>See summaries made by the writer, in the *Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, pp. 52, 59.



While the village population, especially near the industrial cities, is becoming a little more mobile as to residence than formerly, its mobility, in the main, as several studies show, is rather seasonal and local, and is confined largely to men. During slack seasons in farming, and during periods of pestilence or famine, whole families may move to the city or to another village; but it is more frequently the men who go alone to find employment while the families remain at home in their ancestral villages. And, based upon sample studies, it is estimated that 90 per cent of the people live in the same local province or tehsil in which they were born. This shows that the population, on the whole, is very immobile, even though, for short distances, it travels a great deal by train; and this residential stability has certain social and cultural consequences that we shall point out more clearly elsewhere.

The drift toward the increasing dominance of agriculture as a vocation is in contrast to the movement in most countries of the West. The following data on the ratio of the rural population to the entire population in certain selected countries, even though not all brought down to date according to the most recent Census, are evidence in support of this statement:

#### RURAL POPULATION TRENDS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Countries	Per cent rural population is of the entire population	
	1881	1921
England and Wales	32.1	20.7
France	65.2	53.6
Germany*	41.4	(1925) 35.6
Italy*	46.1	34.2
Sweden	84.9	70.5
United States	(1880) 70.5	(1930) 43.8

\* Note: In Italy the population of cities of 5,000 and over has been classified as urban; while in Germany and other European countries above listed, all places of 2,000 and over are classified as urban.

Thus in many countries of the West, urban populations have outstripped the rural in growth; but in India the rural population has been gaining greatly out of proportion to the urban.

India's inability to compete with western countries along industrial lines is largely responsible for this trend. The general lack of industrial development in India has placed the village artisans, who generally employ simple hand tools, in competition with mass production by mechanical methods generally employed by western countries. The pressure of competition under these conditions has

forced the village artisans to give up their traditional skilled occupations and retreat to agriculture as unskilled laborers. This movement has increased the pressure of the population on the land, and has intensified certain other economic and social problems.

**Population Pressure upon the Land.** According to the Census of 1921, the total population was 319,000,000 of which 231,000,000 are described as agricultural. Because of the increase of population, the amount of agricultural land per capita has steadily fallen, as shown by the following figures:

#### TRENDS IN THE POPULATION PRESSURE UPON THE LAND IN INDIA

Year	Cultivated acres, per capita, of agricultural population
1891	1.44
1901	1.29
1911	1.24
1921	1.17

However, the total cultivated area, when divided by the total population of 1921 amounts to only 0.85 acres per capita. Since the population surged forward to about 353,000,000 in 1931, the pressure upon the land has been further materially increased, so that there is today only about 0.76 of an acre of productive farm land per capita.

India imports but very little food, and on the other hand exports very large quantities of such farm products as jute, cotton, rice, wheat, and oil-seeds. The improvements in transportation linking the country with the markets of the West have given a stimulus to the growing of commercial crops like cotton and jute, at the expense of food crops, as is shown by the following figures:

#### INDEX NUMBERS SHOWING "MAN-LAND" RATIOS IN INDIA

(Wadia and Joshi, "The Wealth of India")

Year	Population	Cultivated area	Area under food crops	Area under non-food crops
1891	100	100	100	100
1901	103	102	102	110
1911	110	111	114	137
1921	111	109	109	135

One authority, computing the amount of land per capita actually devoted to the production of food, finds that there is less than two-thirds of an acre so employed, and concludes that there is no other country in the world where the land is required to do so much. Another authority finds that India actually produces only 60 per cent of the cereals needed to feed her people, notwith-



standing the fact that she exports considerable quantities of these cereals. But this picture is brightened somewhat when we recall that through irrigation vast areas of unproductive land may be brought into cultivation. That this movement has not progressed more rapidly may be charged largely to the ignorance, the poverty, and the non-cooperative spirit of the masses involved, especially when cooperation involves patterns of behavior not already set by caste and custom. The picture is further brightened by the fact that taking into account all the land, both productive and non-productive, the density of the population for the country as a whole, in 1921, was only 177 per square mile. This is far below the population density of many other countries. For example, in 1919 the population density of Germany was 332 per square mile; in 1910 that of Switzerland was 236 per square mile; in 1918 that of the Netherlands was 513 per square mile; and in 1921 that of England and Wales was 650 per square mile.

Evidently the pressure of the population on the land for subsistence is not altogether a hopeless problem, though its solution involves the remaking of the social outlook and the customs of the masses as bearing upon their ability to cooperate along new lines and to make use of modern science. It is obvious, however, that under existing conditions the farming must be either very intensive and productive, or other sources of income provided, or the masses allowed to suffer privations and grinding want. Most students of Indian economy probably think the third of these alternatives has been the one selected by the masses, as is evidenced by present conditions throughout village India. But recent improvements in transportation have eased somewhat the situation through making it possible to send relief to famine-stricken areas. Nevertheless, aside from current trends in agricultural production and distribution, India's economic problems are partly due to her lack of vocational balance in the employment of the people. The Royal Commission in its report on agriculture clearly set forth this danger when it said: "At the root of much of the poverty of the people of India and the risks to which they are exposed. . . lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the masses of the population."

Much has been written in recent years on the supreme necessity of remedying the uneven vocational employment of the population by developing manufacturing industries, encouraging emigration, promoting the adoption of scientific methods of farming, etc., but the wide adoption of these suggestions, as yet, is little more than a pious hope. The caste system that discourages vocational adjustment, a philosophy of life that does not have the amas-

sing of economic wealth as its primary goal, age-old tradition, a hot climate, and a number of other factors, combine to hold Indian economy closely to a primitive, self-sufficing type of agriculture.

### *Inefficiency in Agricultural Production*

According to western standards, Indian agriculture is generally very inefficient. This may be noted in methods of farming, average crop yields, and quality of farm animals.

**Agricultural Methods.** Indian agriculture, on the whole, is now, and for long ages past has been, a combination of hand culture and semi-pastoral farming. Small holdings and fragmentation of land, as well as custom and inertia, tend to perpetuate this practice. There are large estates in India, it is true; but it is estimated that the average farm holding is not more than five acres. Moreover, Hindu law and custom governing inheritance encourage the sub-division of these small holdings into a great number of fantastically small, irregular tracts widely scattered throughout a region, so that the physical difficulty of going from tract to tract to do farm work is often great. And, as shown elsewhere, the small scattered holdings in many ways militate against crop improvement and better methods of cultivation and irrigation, and the location of division lines between these small tracts is the cause of numerous lawsuits.

a) **Low Labor Efficiency.** In going from one section to another on an extended tour of India, one is impressed by the fact that nearly all of the farming is done by very primitive methods,—methods that will probably continue to be employed until holdings of land are consolidated and increased considerably in size. Practically all the small grain is cut with small sickles, often, if not usually, in the hands of coolie women. In like manner, potatoes and peanuts are harvested mostly by women using only their bare hands or some crude hand tool in getting the crop out of the ground. Grain is usually threshed by driving livestock around over it, and is separated from the chaff by pouring it slowly from a vessel while the wind is blowing. A windy day during threshing time in the wheat areas calls all the loafing coolies to work, and other activities must wait (see Figs. XI, XII and XIII).

Thus, viewing the primitive methods of farming, one is not surprised at the relatively low efficiency of the Indian farm laborer. Saunders, quoting from Stuart Chase in *Men and Machines*,



presents a comparative table of labor efficiency showing India's position among a number of other countries. The table follows:<sup>1</sup>

### RELATIVE WORK OUTPUT

China	1.0	France	8.25
British India	1.25	Australia	8.50
Russia	2.5	Czecho-Slovakia	9.5
Italy	2.75	Germany	12.0
Japan	3.5	Belgium	16.0
Poland	6.0	Great Britain	18.0
Holland	7.0	Canada	20.0
U. S. of America			30.0

While this table, evidently, is presented for labor of all kinds, it is probable that it is approximately accurate for farm labor in particular. But Indian farm labor is not inefficient because of poor operative methods alone; it is ineffective also because of much illness on the part of the workers, the enervating influence of a hot climate on the workers, and because of long periods of idleness of farmers in many localities.

**b) Low Wages.** Furthermore, farm wages are as backward as the methods of work. Varying a little for different sections of the country, the average day's wages for a woman are six to eight cents in American money, and of a man from two to four cents higher. However, such low wages are offset somewhat by the relatively low cost of the necessities the workers must buy. Rice and other staple foodstuffs are very low in price, as compared with western countries; and valuable perquisites often accrue to the laborer through *jajmani* and other customary employer-employee relationships, so that even under the conditions of low wages, the masses manage somehow to live.

**Crop Yields.** It has been amply demonstrated by agricultural experiment stations and private enterprises that while much of the area of India is arid or semi-arid, by the application of water and other good agricultural practice, high crop yields may be secured. But because of prevailing climatic conditions, against which the average farmer, unstimulated by outside capital and leadership is apt to make but feeble efforts; because of a lack of cooperative spirit among the people outside of the traditional patterns of caste relationships; and because of the force of age-old custom, low crop yields generally prevail. The following figures compare the average yields per acre of some of the important crops of India with those of certain other countries of the world. Jute and a few other important agricultural products of India might be added to this picture, but most of these are of relatively little importance to many of the other countries:

<sup>1</sup>Baunders, *Land and Rural Economics*, p. 88.

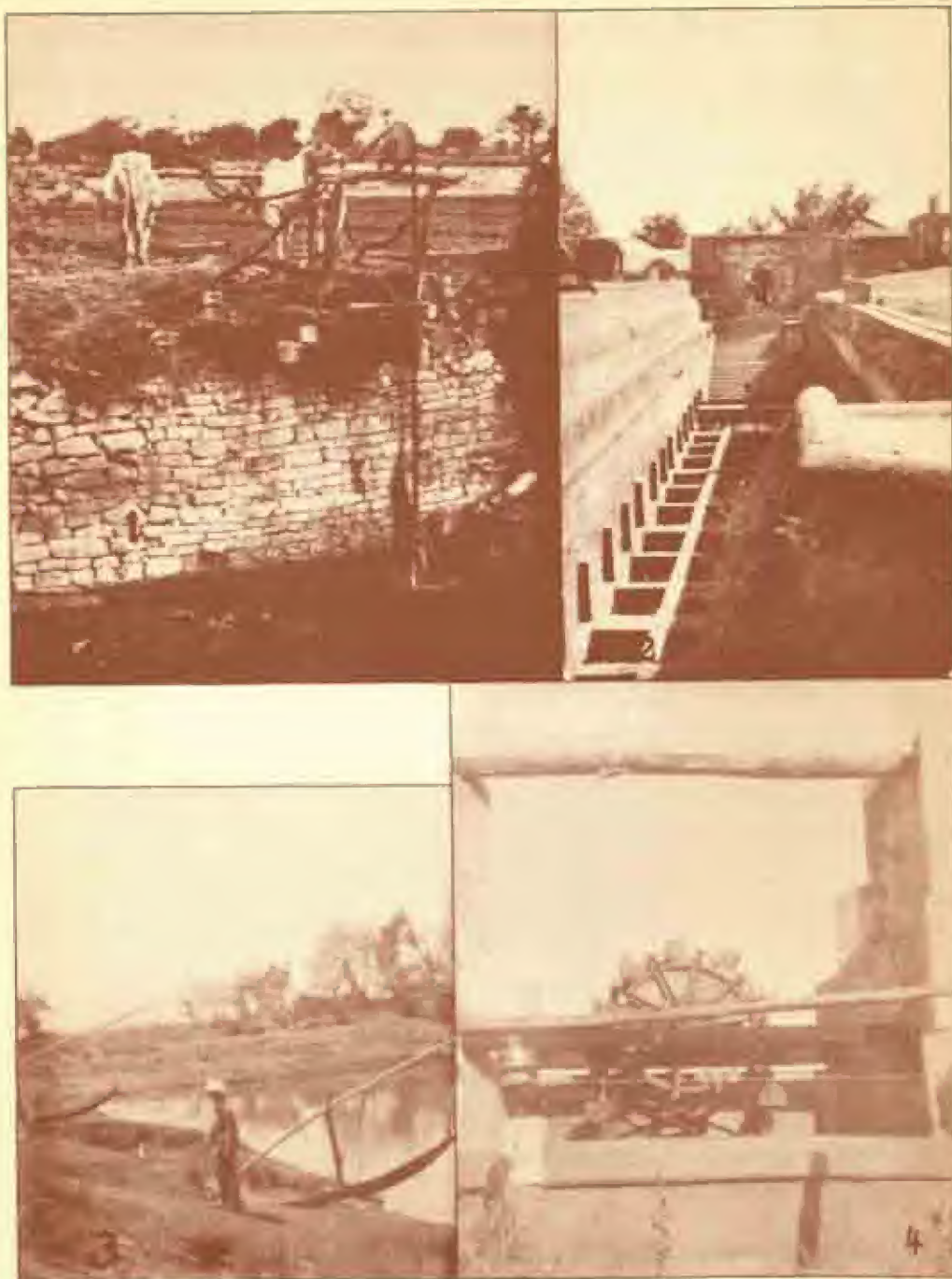


FIG. XIII. AGRICULTURAL METHODS (B): *Lifting water.* 1. A well near Madras, at which bullocks, pulley and leather pail are used to lift the water; 2. A well at Hosang—100 steps leading down from the pail at the far end to the water below; 3. The hollow log and lever, Sriraketan; 4. The Persian wheel, and a woman carrier, Anklesan.





AVERAGE YIELDS IN POUNDS PER ACRE FOR  
1919-1920, AND 1920-1921(Wadia & Joshi, *The Wealth of India*)

Countries	Wheat	Barley	Maize	Rice	Tes	Cotton	Linseed	Tobacco
United Kingdom	1861	1550	—	—	—	—	—	—
France	1185	1015	882	534	—	—	429	1390
Italy	900	775	1354	3500	—	—	463	837
United States	775	1077	1684	1755	—	151	330	784
Canada	748	1077	3046	—	—	—	321	980
Australia	775	802	1425	—	—	—	347	1007
Japan	1318	1496	1487	3232	640	347	401	1479
Egypt	1496	1425	2013	2610	—	294	1033	—
British India	677	994	1163	1336	518	89	255	—

The matter of greatest importance shown by this table is the fact that, in most cases, India has the lowest per acre yield among the countries listed. This throws light upon the poverty of the masses, as well as upon the general status of agriculture as the major vocation of the country.

Various causes are responsible for the extremely low crop yields in Indian agriculture. Long continued cropping without sufficient regard to the maintenance of the fertility of the soil has brought the land to a very low level of production. As shown elsewhere in this account of Indian culture, most of the manure from livestock is burned as fuel, instead of being put upon the soil as fertilizer. Moreover, green manure crops and commercial fertilizers have not won their way into wide use among the Indian farmers, and crop rotation is not widely practiced. If a tract of farm land has become thoroughly exhausted, it may be permitted to lie vacant for a time; and it is estimated that 50,000,000 acres are fallowed yearly, and thus taken out of active production.

Low crop yields may also be charged to the excessive subdivision and fragmentation of land. For example, if a man has a few tiny, irregular spots of land widely scattered about, he is not apt to be interested either in the cooperative construction of irrigation wells, or in fighting crop diseases and pests. Moreover, if he sows a good variety of seed, the crop soon becomes a hopeless mixture because of the poor quality of seed used by his ignorant and conservative neighbors.

The uncertainty of the monsoon (rainy weather) is another cause of low crop yields in some years. If the monsoon is normal and timely in its appearance and distribution of rain, a bumper crop may be reaped; if it fails, the crop may not be worth the seed sown. The experience for the greater portion of India is that out of five successive crop-years, two will be very poor, two indifferent, and one good. This age-old struggle against nature, supported by religious belief and custom, has made the Indian farmer both fatalistic and very conservative.



**Irrigation.** The extremely uncertain character of the rainfall in most parts of India makes irrigation an important factor in agricultural development. Since the economic and the social conditions among the masses generally are not favorable to the construction of irrigation works, the progress of irrigation has been extremely slow. In 1925, out of a gross sown area of 257,000,000 acres, only 19.8 per cent was irrigated. Thus, even though Indian agriculture extends back into antiquity, and has had ample time to develop irrigation, the proportion of land irrigated is relatively small. This seems true especially since the population is great and large areas of unoccupied land may be added to agriculture through irrigation. As the situation now exists, it is estimated that more than a third of the total acreage of the country is unfit for cultivation, and nearly a fourth is cultivable but unoccupied, largely because of lack of water.

But Government is leading the way through the promotion of irrigation engineering. This is done largely through the sinking of wells and the impounding of the surplus water of the monsoon period. Nearly one-half of the area irrigated is watered by private wells and tanks (artificial lakes), and the rest by canals. Since, over large tracts in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, in Sindh, the Punjab, and in the Central Provinces, the growing of crops without irrigation is extremely precarious, Government has begun to concentrate here upon the development of a far-flung irrigation program.

The introduction of irrigation has brought in its train, in many parts of the country, serious problems. Under canal irrigation especially, cultivators are apt to use too much water, and this interferes with the aeration of the soil and makes crops more susceptible to diseases like rust and mildew. The use of too much water in certain areas also leads to the concentration of injurious salts in the soil, which ultimately makes the land unfit for growing crops. Such alkali lands have become common in parts of the United Provinces, Punjab, Sindh, and the North West Frontier Province; and large tracts of land in the Nira Valley in the Deccan have become useless on account of salt deposits. Moreover, irrigation, through the encouragement of mosquitoes, augments the malaria hazard, and it requires the learning of a new type of farming, hence the adoption of new food habits and the promotion of new patterns of social behavior. The irrigation of a community, heretofore arid or semi-arid, also frequently softens roadbeds so as to require new road construction, raises the water table in the soil so as to drown out indigenous pasture grasses, and requires the building of storage bins above ground. Thus, aside from questions of cooperative ef-

fort, it appears that irrigation is frequently attended by special problems, and so should be introduced with great caution. This is a case where, in the absence of adequate experience and expert advice, the conservatism of the farmer may not be altogether an evil.

**The Contribution of Cattle to Agricultural Production.** Elsewhere we have discussed the place of the cow in Indian tradition and economic life. We need not here repeat that discussion, other than to call attention again to the importance of the cow to India, and India's need for livestock improvement.

The agricultural population is rapidly increasing the pressure on the land for subsistence; hence the situation calls for better farming in all of its departments, including better livestock. It may also be pointed out that the increasing dependence of the entire population upon farming as a vocation not only brings human beings into a more rigorous competition with one another in the struggle for subsistence, but it also brings them and their livestock mutually into keener competition for the use of the land. Writing upon this condition in the United Provinces, Professor R. Mukherjee says in part: "We are witnessing today the gradual ascent of cultivation to the mountains, the transformation of hill slopes into red laterite desert, and the almost complete conversion of pastures into tilled lands."<sup>2</sup> This eminent authority continues further: "The reduction of open grazing lands and the inability to devote any but a mere fraction of the holdings to fodder crops have resulted in the impoverishment of cattle and the reduction of their numbers."<sup>4</sup>

Loss of cattle through disease and starvation is one of the major problems of Indian farm economy. For example, in the year 1926-27, according to the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, India lost from rinderpest 202,200 head of cattle; from haemorrhagic septicaemia, 36,400; from foot and mouth disease, 13,600. It has also been estimated that the annual loss of livestock by snake bite is around 90,000 to 100,000 head. Moreover, in times of famine multiplied thousands of cattle die of starvation or are sold for a few rupees a head. In 1918, the Bombay Presidency, alone, lost 1,000,000, or one-ninth of its cattle; and, in 1918-19, in one district of the United Provinces, no fewer than 200,000 cattle were lost.<sup>3</sup> The control of communicable diseases among livestock through quarantine, the use of immunizing vaccines, etc., has never been widely accepted by the native farmers, because these steps run

<sup>2</sup>Mukherjee, R., *The Rural Economy of India*, pp. 139, 193, 194.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* Also consult appropriate sections of the *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV.

<sup>4</sup>For a more complete summary of these conditions, see the *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV., pp. 63-67.



counter to their ancient customs and beliefs. Likewise the growth of guinea grass, alfalfa, and other heavy-producing forage crops under irrigation has not been widely practiced by the farmers, nor has the use of the pit silo for the preservation of surplus monsoon forage in anticipation of the scarcity of feed for livestock during the inevitable dry season which follows. However, Government, Christian missions, and other agencies, through experimentation, demonstration, and education, are endeavoring to solve the maintenance problems of livestock production. Likewise these agencies are endeavoring to get the farmers to produce better animals through better selection and breeding. These agencies also are conducting in many places experimental work in cattle, goat, and poultry breeding, and have improved sires located at convenient points for the promotion of better livestock farming. However, all of these efforts, with a few happy exceptions, are making but slow headway, owing to the ignorance and the conservatism of the Indian farmers.

### *Agricultural Credit*

**Indebtedness.** The Indian farmer, even though he may operate on a small scale and in a very simple manner, must make expenditures for seed, work animals, tools, food, and other expenses connected with the production of farm commodities. Procuring these often leads to debt, but this is not the chief cause of debt. Being a very sociable creature and bound by customs which call for large expenditures on weddings, funerals, pilgrimages, gifts to beggars, and other "non-productive" enterprises, he soon becomes inextricably involved in debt. His needs, whether economic or social, usually send him to the local money lender, who may charge 50 per cent or more interest. Thus the borrower is not only in danger of bondage to an oppressor, but his business is apt to become greatly handicapped and demoralized.

Various inquiries have been made by provincial banking committees and other agencies into the extent of indebtedness. The following table was gleaned from the recent reports of a number of these committees:<sup>6</sup>

### INDIAN INDEBTEDNESS (A PARTIAL SURVEY)

Province	Total debt, in rupees (1930)	Debt per cultivated acre, in rupees
Punjab .....	133 crores*	27-0-0
Bombay .....	81 "	20-0-0
Bihar and Orissa .....	155 "	
Central Provinces and Berar .....	30 "	9-5-0
Madras .....	150 "	

\*A crore equals 100 lakhs, or ten million rupees.

<sup>6</sup>The Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 79; also India in 1930-31, p. 167.

However, the total indebtedness of rural India is not definitely known. Ten years ago it was variously estimated from 300 to 600 crores of rupees, and no doubt in spite of all that has been done in recent years to check it, it has increased considerably since that time. In the year 1921 the debt of Punjab was estimated at 90 crores of rupees. By 1930 it had risen to 135 crores; and in the same period the number of those indebted increased about two million.<sup>7</sup>

What makes debt so serious is not so much its size in total amounts of money or in the number of people involved, but because so much of it is incurred for non-productive purposes. In the Punjab inquiry, it was found that only five per cent of the debt was incurred for land improvements, the rest being incurred largely in extravagant expenditures on compound interest, marriage festivities, lawsuits, etc. Darling estimates that in the Punjab from 33 to 50 per cent of the debt is due to compound interest alone.<sup>8</sup> Likewise McDougall, in his study of a Chhattisgarh village, estimated that seven-eighths of the debt was for unproductive purposes;<sup>9</sup> and Dr. Mann in his study of a Deccan village, estimated that 27 per cent of the total income of the village was expended on interest on debt.<sup>10</sup>

The percentage of farmers free of debt varies from province to province. In Multan in 1925, only 25 per cent of the families were free of debt, while in Lyallpur, 51 per cent were free. A settlement officer in one of the other rural tehsils of the Punjab reported only 10 per cent of the people free of debt, and remarked that these were too poor to borrow.<sup>11</sup>

In summarizing the conclusions of those who have studied the indebtedness of Indian villagers, the following reasons for indebtedness are listed:

1. The small size of holdings and their fragmentation, combined with the vagaries of the climate and the occasional onslaughts of disease and pestilence, which make farming unprofitable and keep the farmer near the poverty line.
2. A constantly recurring loss of cattle from drought, disease, and the negligence of the owners, and the effect of other losses due to the semi-pastoral system of farming in vogue in most parts of the country.
3. The ingrained improvidence of the ryots (farmers) which is greatly accentuated by the insecurity of crops and live-stock.

<sup>7</sup>Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 79, reviewing the report of the Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee.

<sup>8</sup>Darling, M. L., *The Punjab Peasant*, Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 79.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 86.



4. Extravagant expenditures on jewelry, marriages, funerals, religious festivals, pilgrimages, lawsuits, interest on indebtedness, and other non-productive things.
5. Borrowing made easy by the money lender.
6. A desire for luxury. For example, the increased prosperity given the canal colonies of the Punjab through irrigation, while temporarily putting the farmers on a sounder economic basis, also soon led them to increase their indebtedness and the amount of tenancy.<sup>12</sup> This new prosperity also seemed to increase litigation, or was accompanied by an accelerated inclination of the ryots to litigation.
7. Custom requires the son to assume his father's debts at his father's death.
8. A quirk in the psychology of the peasant, which causes him to regard his ability to incur a large debt as a compliment to his social status. Thus he gayly goes into debt when he can and pays when he must.<sup>13</sup>

**Cooperative Effort.** In comparatively recent years, people from the West living in India in the capacity of government officials, philanthropic individuals, and Christian missionaries, have been attempting to engraft upon that country the cooperative movement which has proved so successful in Denmark and to a lesser extent perhaps in certain other countries of the West. Their aim has been to encourage self-help among the ryots in order that they may be freed from extortionate private money lenders, and in order that better business principles generally may be adopted by the people. This, on the whole, according to the view of many observers, has met with indifferent success thus far, though in a number of specific cases and places it has done well indeed.

The indifferent success of the cooperative movement, according to the belief of intelligent observers, is due to many factors. These include, on the part of many leaders, an inadequate grasp of Indian philosophy and the psychology of village life, as well as inadequate understanding of the economic conditions of the villages and the factors of social culture that make the management of cooperative credit societies difficult. Moreover, in many cases, sentimentality has blinded the leaders to these difficulties and to their own ignorance of banking and finance, even in their home lands, to say nothing of the strange and difficult condition of an oriental land such as India. And, as just intimated, the villagers have not been prepared by tradition or custom for such new economic conceptions and practices.

<sup>12</sup>Darling, M. L., *The Punjab Peasant*, p. 246.

<sup>13</sup>*The Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, pp. 79-80.

In many countries of the West, cooperative merchandizing and credit societies have largely grown up spontaneously as the result of the initiative and a spirit of self-help on the part of the people immediately interested. In many cases the government, without incurring any economic responsibility, aside perhaps from a certain amount of regulation and inspection, has merely granted permission to individuals and groups to organize for self-help. But the cooperative movement in India, on the contrary, has had a different inception and administrative set-up. Cooperative societies, as affairs of Government in India, were first provided by an act of law in 1904, not in response to popular demand, but by a Government anxious to ameliorate the difficult conditions of its people. These societies were started essentially to help the cultivators through loans of money on easy terms, and these societies have been kept closely connected with Government, a Commissioner of Cooperative Societies being in administrative and inspectorial charge.

The development of this movement in India has taken a rather unique turn. For example, credit societies have shown a disproportionate growth over non-credit societies. In 1926-27 there were 65,101 credit societies in British India with a membership of 2,115,746; and only 2,133 non-credit societies with a membership of 154,322. More than 95 per cent of all these were agricultural societies.<sup>11</sup> By 1929-30 the number of cooperative societies in British India had reached 88,693, and in the Indian States, 15,494, with a membership respectively of 3,583,706 and 598,198.<sup>12</sup> On the surface this seems to be an excellent showing both as to number of societies and number of members. Yet many critical observers look upon this apparently favorable growth of the movement with suspicion, especially because it has developed so largely along credit lines, because much of the borrowing is done for non-productive purposes, and there is a great deal of defaulting of payments. They argue that popularity alone is not an adequate measure of success, but that prompt repayment of borrowed money out of the profits accruing from a productive business is a better criterion; and many think this desirable situation has not, as yet, been attained generally throughout the country. However, a few instances of successful cooperation, such as in the Mission of the Brethren at Anklesvar, and the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Borsad, came to the attention of the writer in his travels throughout India, and these successes constitute a ray of hope for the future of the cooperative movement.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 81, quoting the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>India in 1930-31, p. 331.



But as already shown, the path of cooperative societies in India is not strewn with roses. In addition to the handicaps previously mentioned are the illiteracy and ignorance of the borrowers. Rascals, even among officials of cooperative societies, cheat the borrower who cannot read what he thinks he has committed himself to on paper. Yet even a more fundamental difficulty is that of securing cooperative effort along commercialized economic lines from a civilization that is built chiefly upon a social and a religious rather than an economic foundation. Thus a vast number of cooperators and would-be cooperators are inclined to look upon the cooperative society not as a help in productive economic effort, but as a charitable institution whose advances need not be repaid. This intensifies the problem of securing punctual repayments of loans, and often results in much defaulting of payments entirely. Saunders points out two other difficulties especially applicable to non-credit cooperative societies. He writes: "Indian ryots are individualistic . . . and there is not confidence and faith in each other; there is still too much fear and suspicion. Another difficulty in the way of organized buying and selling is the smallness of the average ryot's needs and the little that he has to sell."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the first part of this statement might be made with equal application to farmers in countries of the West.

**The Private Money Lender.** The private money lenders, by custom, have been firmly tied into the socio-economic life of India. While they have been criticized in the most severe terms as rascals and heartless task-masters, something can be said in their favor. They know their community and their several clients' needs, and are usually ready to give aid in time of need, often when the chances for the ultimate recovery of their loans may not be very promising. This is a risk that an ordinary bank or credit society is not prepared to take. Dr. Wiser, a close student of Indian village affairs, senses this fact, and hence also senses the limitations to the usefulness of cooperative credit societies developed along western lines. He writes with respect to agricultural credit in the village of Karimpur: "A dozen men in the village have enough cash and grain reserve to be able at any time to make advances of money or grain to the villagers. Others make a few loans from time to time. The interest rates charged are usually 50 per cent on grain, and 12 to 37½ per cent on cash, 24 per cent being the most common rate. Undoubtedly the creditor stands to gain from his transactions, but there is a limit. If a client goes bankrupt, he can do nothing about it; consequently it is to his interests to keep his loans within reasonable bounds.

<sup>10</sup>The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 32, quoting Saunders, A. J., *Land and Rural Economics*, p. 110.

Where the debtor and the creditor have grown up together and know each other's daily doings, there is little opportunity for deceiving one another. An outside creditor always has difficulty in knowing a man's financial status. Above mere financial transactions, the man with means has under the caste system a moral obligation to his poorer neighbor. He is therefore not unduly upset in losing money to his debtors. Their interests, likewise, must come first . . . Government cooperative credit societies require that once a villager has joined a society he must not borrow further from a villager. Loans are granted at fixed times and a number of regulations are attached to the granting of each loan. The village creditor does not apply these restrictions to loans, hence the villager prefers to borrow from a fellow villager at a higher rate of interest than to be limited in the purposes for which he may borrow. At present the local credit facilities are adequate for Karimpur."<sup>17</sup>

In discussing the private money lender with a number of students of Indian village economy, there was a pretty general agreement that under common current conditions he is both an asset and a liability to the socio-economic welfare of the public. At his best, he is not only an extender of needed credit, along the lines of the current mores of the people, but through withholding or otherwise guarding the extension of credit he may act as a sort of conservator of the home and the business of reckless borrowers. At his worst, he is a scoundrel and a thief who preys upon the ignorance and the weakness of his clients. Many would pass rigorous legislation to limit the private money lenders' activities, and to punish severely those who infringe upon these legislative limitations. The weakness of such proposals lies mainly in their enforcement. If age-old custom and the spirit of *laissez faire* should operate, as we fear they might, such legislative limitations would soon become dead letters, and hence inoperative. Some have suggested legislation outlawing inherited debts, limiting interest rates, and providing a very liberal bankruptcy relief from unjust and outlawed debts of all kinds. These proposals need patient, scientific study by those agencies and persons who are fully equipped by education and experience in Indian affairs to do an intelligent and trustworthy job of it. This indeed is no task for those whose education and experience is wholly or largely western; nor is it the task of nationals lacking in experience in practical affairs and whose education is chiefly academic and theoretical. Caution, experimentation, and patience should be the watchwords for such procedure.

<sup>17</sup>Wiener, Wm. H., *The Social Institutions of a Hindu Village in North India*, p. 294.



## Chapter XI

### FARM INCOMES AND STANDARDS OF LIVING

#### *Farm Incomes*

In a country like India, so vast and so diverse in its climatic, agricultural, and social conditions, any attempt to estimate the total production or to calculate per capita income is necessarily artificial. While land records in perhaps most of the country, particularly British India, are kept fairly accurately, figures upon many items, including the amount of agricultural commodities produced per annum, yields per acre, and income per acre, per farm, or per capita, are largely matters of opinion, hence they must be accepted with caution. However, several students of Indian affairs have made authoritative studies which are of service to us in trying to give the reader some notion as to the income and standards of living enjoyed by Indian farmers.

The earliest important attempt to calculate the production and the per capita incomes of India seems to have been that of the late Dadabhai Naoroji toward the close of the last century. On the basis of official figures published by Government for the years 1867-70, he calculated a year's agricultural production of British India to reach the value of 277,000,000 pounds sterling. Deducting six per cent for seed, the value of the balance available for human consumption and other use was put down as 260,000,000 pounds, or 2,600,000,000 rupees. Then follow estimates by Earl Cromer and Sir David Balfour, Lord Curzon, and others, as briefly summarized in the following table:

#### THE ESTIMATED AGRICULTURAL INCOME OF BRITISH INDIA

(Shah and Khambatta, "The Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India")

By whom estimated	Year	Total gross agricultural income in rupees	Population dependent upon agri- culture	Per capita income of agriculturals in rupees
Dadabhai Naoroji	1867-70	2,600,000,000	110,914,903	23-0-0
Lord Curzon	1880	4,500,000,000	119,127,228	38-0-0
Cromer & Balfour	1875-1911	3,500,000,000	116,723,400	30-0-0
Shah & Khambatta	1900-22	12,321,000,000	220,100,000	56-0-0
Wadia & Joshi	1913-14	10,033,029,260	173,084,698	58-0-0
Shieras	1921-22	19,834,100,000	190,312,403	104-0-0
Shah & Khambatta	1921-22	20,978,000,000	232,870,000	90-0-0

These figures for the annual per capita income of the agriculturist tell a woeful tale. Counting three rupees to the dollar, we thus note that the estimates of annual per capita income vary from about \$35.00 to \$7.70 in American money. Even the most favorable of these estimates show that the average income of the Indian agriculturist is very low. This average income is an index of his capacity to purchase and consume, and hence to his standard of living as well. This fact is emphasized by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's statement, based on the standard of maintenance of prisoners, that the farmer's income was too low for bare subsistence. He estimated that for the bare subsistence of a criminal confined in jail, a sum of 34 rupees was required per year, while the average income of agriculturists was only 23 rupees per capita, and 20 rupees for all classes of Indians in general, out of which must be provided food, shelter, clothing, little luxuries, the satisfaction of all social and religious wants, all expenses of occasions of joy and sorrow, and provisions for bad crop seasons!

The general state of affairs revealed in the previous table of income estimates is confirmed by the findings of various investigators of village economy. For example, Mr. R. Mukherjee, in his book *Fields and Farmers of Oudh*, has shown the economic conditions of three typical middle class families for the year 1924-25 to be as follows:

#### THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES IN OUDH

(Mukherjee's Findings for the Year 1923)

	Families		
	I	II	III
Net profits of cultivation .....	Rs. 288	Rs. 65	Rs. 199
Income from other sources.....	150	200	60
Total income from all sources....	438	265	259
Total expenditures .....	521	414	275
Net results .....	(saving) 117	(deficit) 149	(deficit) 16

Likewise Dr. H. H. Mann, in his *Land and Labor in a Deccan Village* (Jategaon), taking into consideration all sources of income, calculated the average family income to be Rs. 167-13-0, and the per capita income Rs. 33-12-0.<sup>1</sup> He also found that the average debt per capita in this village was Rs. 39-12-0, bearing an interest rate varying from 12 to 75 per cent. He furthermore estimated that 85 per cent of the villagers were insolvent. Mukthyar, in his *Brief Survey of Rural Conditions in British Gujerat*; McDougall in *An Economic Survey of a Village in the Chhattisgarh*; Darling, in his *Punjab Peasant*; Shah and Khambatta in their *Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India*, and other

<sup>1</sup>Second study, p. 95, Oxford University Press, 1921.



students of Indian economy, with but slight variations, tell about the same sort of story. Perhaps one of the most favorable farm incomes was recorded by Jacks in his *Economic Life of a Bengal Village*. Here 49 per cent of the families were thought to be living in comfort with an average income of 365 rupees, and the remainder were living in varying degrees of distress. This village was in the rice area, and evidently was fairly prosperous. While irrigation has brought a measure of prosperity to areas like the Punjab, and favorable climatic conditions have greatly benefited other sections, a general summary of the income of the masses of India as a whole, leads one to the conclusion that the economic status of the average village family in India is distressingly low.

In our further consideration of the income of the Indian farmers, it is of interest to note certain comparisons made by Sir Josiah Stamp of income per capita among some of the leading nations of the world. While these figures are for all vocational classes, including farmers, they throw light upon the subject of Indian farm incomes, especially since roughly three-fourths of the Indian people are farmers. His findings, quoted by Wadia and Joshi in their *Wealth of India* are as follows:

PER CAPITA INCOME  
AMONG A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN 1914

(Estimated by Wadia and Joshi in their "Wealth of India")

Country	Income per capita in 1914, in pounds sterling
United States of America.....	72
Australia .....	54
United Kingdom .....	50
Canada .....	40
France .....	38
Germany .....	30
Italy .....	23
Spain .....	11
Japan .....	6
India .....	3

The numerical comparisons of incomes among countries may be misleading, because conditions may vary from country to country, hence requirements and standards would vary also; but the tremendous differences between the incomes of the more favored nations and that of India lead to only one conclusion, and that is, the masses of India, when compared with the peoples of certain other countries, are undergoing a grinding poverty.

*The Standards of Living of Agriculturists*

Having made a brief survey of the incomes of the Indian agriculturists, we may now note just how this income is spent. To do this we shall proceed to make an examination of some of the

details of consumption, but we must first call the reader's attention to the fact that in a country so vast and so varied in climate, and in economic and social conditions, generalizations on almost any social phenomenon should be made with caution.

**The Findings of Special Studies.** The following table taken from Dr. H. H. Mann's study of the village of Pimla Soudhagar, near the city of Poona, represents the average minimum standards of consumption set by the people of that village:<sup>2</sup>

#### STANDARDS OF CONSUMPTION IN PIMLA SOUDHAGAR

(Findings of Dr. Mann's Study, Published 1917)

Items of expense	Man		Woman		Child		Family of five	
	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.
Food.....	37	—8	30	—0	22	—8	142	—0
Clothing.....	12	—0	12	—0	6	—0	48	—0
Other expenses.....	—		—		—		10	—0
<b>TOTAL.....</b>							<b>200</b>	<b>—0</b>

But out of 103 families investigated, only 36, or just under 35 per cent, could pay their own way on the standard they themselves laid down. As a group, the 103 families had a total income of 22,459 rupees, and made expenditures amounting to 25,093 rupees, of which 2,592 rupees was interest on debt. This resulted in a decided deficit. In Sholavandan, a village situated in an excellent agricultural section near Madura, Saunders found, after making an itemized survey of income and expenditures of three typical families, annual savings, respectively, of Rs. 92-8, Rs. 10-0, and Rs. 30-0.<sup>3</sup> In the canal colonies of the Punjab, perhaps in many respects, the best farming section in India, Darling reports rather favorable standards of living, but also reports increasing farm tenancy.<sup>4</sup> The prosperity brought to this region, due to increased yields accruing from irrigation, has increased the farmers' ability to borrow money, hence their ability to finance numerous lawsuits, to pay bribes and make other wasteful expenditures that threaten their sudden prosperity.

Mukerjee has computed a percentage distribution of the average family budgetary expenditures of six different vocational classes as follows, which he thinks is fairly representative of India as a whole:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>First study, Oxford University Press, 1917, pp. 129-139.

<sup>3</sup>Saunders, A. J., Village Economic Surveys, Journal of the Royal Economic Society, Vol. XXVII, 1916, pp. 548-553.

<sup>4</sup>Darling, M. L., The Punjab Peasant.

<sup>5</sup>See Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, for this and other references on income and standards of living.



## THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILY BUDGET

(A Recent Estimate for all India by Dr. R. Mukerjee)

Items of expense	Day Laborer, per cent	Agriculturist, per cent	Carpenter, per cent	Blacksmith, per cent	Shop-keeper, per cent	Poor middle class, per cent
Food	95.4	94.0	85.5	79.0	77.7	74.0
Clothing	4.0	3.0	12.0	11.0	9.0	4.7
Medicine	—	1.0	1.5	5.0	5.9	8.0
Education	—	—	—	—	1.0	3.3
Religious and social ceremonies	0.6	2.0	3.0	5.0	6.4	10.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It will be noticed that the agriculturist spends 94 per cent of his income on food alone, and has to be satisfied with the remaining 6 per cent to meet all the other requirements of life. This distribution of the meagre income, even in a land of modest wants and simple habits, indicates a pauperous condition.

**Food.** The food of the agricultural classes consists mostly of cereals, for we should remember that the orthodox Hindu, both by religion and custom, is essentially a vegetarian. In Bengal and Malabar the food is mostly rice with a few vegetables and fish; in the Tamil country it is chiefly ragi; in the Telegu country it is mostly rice with chili powder to whet the appetite; in the Decan it is gowar or bajri; and in the Punjab and the United Provinces it is mostly wheat. Among the tribe of Todas in the Nilgiris country, and in certain other sections maintaining a better type of cattle and buffaloes than usually found in the country as a whole, dairy products constitute an important part of the diet. But as pointed out elsewhere, the livestock of India, as a whole, is so poor, and hence the production of dairy products so scant, that these products form an insignificant part of the dietary of the average village family. Yet worst of all, in spite of the fact that these people spend such a large percentage of their income on food, they often do not have enough to eat.

As stated more at length in a previous chapter, the facilities for the preparation and the serving of the food of the average village family are extremely simple. Of course the wealthier classes usually provide a more pretentious equipment, and the palaces of the ruling princes often reach the heights of grandeur, even in their equipment for cooking and dining and in their courtly formality in the service of meals; but the vast teeming masses yet prepare and serve their food in a primitive manner very much as they have done for long ages past. In spite of the apparent simplicity and lack of formality with which food is prepared and

served, there is, especially among the higher castes, a strict code of taboos which regulates the kind of food that may be eaten, the persons who may prepare and serve it, the persons with whom one may eat his meals, etc. This is one of the many indications that Indian society and folkways are vastly more complex than they may appear to the uninitiated western observer.

**Clothing.** Of clothing, except in some parts of North India, the agriculturist will probably have only a loin cloth (*dhoty*) and another piece of cloth to cover his limbs; or, in addition to a loin cloth, he may have on the upper part of his body only a loose shirt with the tail out, skirt fashion. He may also go bareheaded or have a cloth wound loosely around the top of his head. Moreover, he and his entire family nearly always go barefoot. The professional and the wealthier classes may wear shoes as do the people of the West, though sandals are more often worn, if footwear is had at all. In the north where, during a part of the year, it is fairly cold, the agriculturist provides himself with more clothing; but the clothing used is always of the cheapest kind, and clothing costs amount to only a few rupees a year.

**Dwellings.** The homes of the villagers have been described in an earlier chapter, as to materials used in construction, their arrangement, etc., so we need to do but little more here than call the reader's attention to the simplicity of the average village dwelling houses, even their crudeness and poverty, in order to give an integrated picture of the average villager's standards of living. However, we should not imagine that all homes, even of the villages, appear in this class. We are merely speaking of the village masses who constitute most of the population. Among the wealthier and the professional classes, the homes are more pretentious, even elegant, and compare favorably with the homes of similar classes in the West. We should state, however, that the insanitary conditions of the homes of the poorer classes are often ameliorated somewhat by the outdoor life of the people. As noted in an earlier chapter, during the hotter part of the year the poorer people often sleep outside their houses. This is probably the Indian counterpart to the outdoor life enjoyed by some westerners on excursions, in rustic camps, and on sleeping porches.

The cost of erecting a house varies greatly according to the wealth of the owner. For example, I saw in the lower Ganges Valley a small brush house that a young man had prepared for his bride. The total cost of this tent-like affair was perhaps less than 10 rupees (about \$3). In a few years this couple may replace this with a better house costing more. I also have in mind a teacher's bungalow consisting of two stories and five rooms, spa-



cious verandahs, running water, and sanitary bath equipment, which cost 500 rupees! The same house in America would cost many times as much. It is probable that the same amount of money expended on a modern one-family home of the middle class in America, if spent on a home in India would build an imposing mansion expected of royalty and the wealthy classes. This fact constitutes an index to differences in costs of labor and building materials in the two countries.

### *The Cost of Social Occasions*

A discussion of Indian incomes and standards of living would not be complete without some attention given to the cost of social occasions. Most rural folk of this interesting country, whether Hindu or non-Hindu, are slaves to custom and convention which require that numerous festivals and ceremonies shall be celebrated with great pomp and show. Every village and caste has certain standards set for these festive occasions, and they must maintain that standard whether or not they have the resources. Such expenditures are usually out of all proportion to the income of the family, and this is one of the principal causes of poverty and of universal indebtedness to the private money lenders.

**Marriage Costs.** Marriage is one of the chief occasions of extravagant spending. It is said that at least one year's income is spent on the average marriage, and that the average householder will have to celebrate at least four marriages during his lifetime. The match-maker who negotiates the betrothal, the astrologer who consults the stars to see if the auspices are propitious for the betrothal and who determines a suitable time for the marriage ceremony, the officiating priest, the musicians and entertainers, the jewelry-maker, and more particularly those who provide the food served to a large number of invited guests and the village idlers who "happen" to pass by, all make a heavy financial inroad upon the family of the bride, or sometimes of the families of both the bride and the groom. Thus, on the part of the bride's father, a wedding usually means *debt* at extortionate interest rates, and sometimes this debt is so great as never to be paid, so it is passed on to the sons of the family as an inheritance which custom and honor demand that they assume (Fig. IX).

The following table taken from Mr. M. D. Mukthyar's *Brief Survey of Rural Conditions in British Gujerat*,<sup>6</sup> gives us a comparative idea of the marriage expenses among a number of different castes in that section of India:

<sup>6</sup>Bombay University Press, 1925.

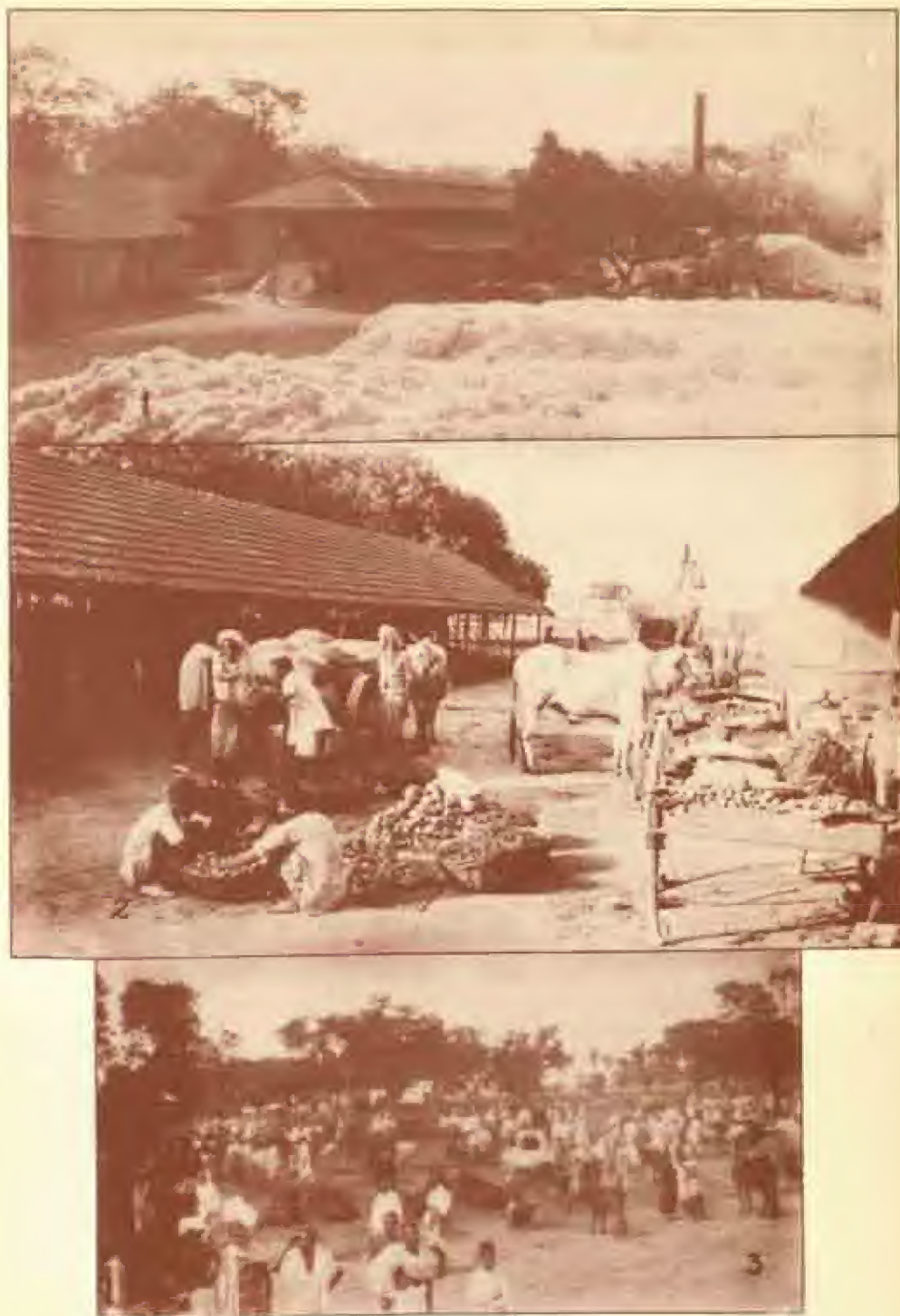


FIG XIV. INDIAN MARKETS. 1. A cotton gin, Ankleswar; 2. Farm products prepared for market, the Allahabad Agricultural Institute in the background; 3. A shanty, Rampet.





## MARRIAGE EXPENSES IN THE GUJERAT

(Mukherjee's Survey, Published 1925)

Caste	A Boy	A Girl	Remarriage of a Man	Remarriage of a Woman
Rajputs	Rs. 800-1000	Rs. 200-300	Rs. 600-700	Rs. 100-150
Shoemakers	200-300	100-150	400-600	60-100
Potters	650-800	150-250	1000-1100	75-125
Sweepers	50-75	30-50	30-50	20-30
Mohammedans	400-700	150-250	60-125	40-60
Banyas (high caste merchants)	2500-4000	700-1500	—	—

It is to be noted from these figures that the most money is spent on the first marriage of a man, and the least on the remarriage of a woman. In the Malhera village of Oudh, Professor Mukherjee<sup>7</sup> found that the Patwari, an official of the village, spent in fifteen years 6,800 rupees on the marriage, and other ceremonies connected therewith, of his two daughters and two sons. His annual income was 1371 rupees. In the same village a blacksmith with an annual income of 1595 rupees spent 500 rupees on social ceremonies in the year 1924-25 alone. The figures showing the relative costs of the social ceremonies of three middle-class families in this locality for that year were as follows:

## RELATIVE COSTS OF SOCIAL CEREMONIES IN OUDH

(Mukherjee's Study, Published 1926)

	I	FAMILIES II	III
Total income .....	Rs. 438	Rs. 265	Rs. 259
Total household expenditures .....	521	414	275
Expenditures on social ceremonies.....	100	200	100

**Other Social Expenses.** In like manner, making of extended pilgrimages to distant holy places involves the discontinuance from productive work of many individuals for long periods of time. The loss from this source alone would amount to a vast sum annually, for it is said that it is the pious hope of most orthodox Hindus to make at least one extended religious pilgrimage to Benares, Conjeevaram or some other distant sacred place, besides many journeys to closer places. These pilgrimages, while satisfying the spiritual man, also subject him to disease and hardships which may either incapacitate him permanently as a productive worker, or cause him to sacrifice his life. It is said that the traditional over-night stopping places of pilgrims often become very insanitary and a fruitful place for the spreading of cholera and other contagious diseases. It is said also, so great is the death rate about these places at times during certain seasons

<sup>7</sup>Rural Economy of India, Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1926.



of pilgrimage, that preparations are made in advance for the disposal of the bodies of large numbers who are expected to die on the way. While pilgrims in making the journey are often subject to the sacrificial expenditures of large sums of money, they are sometimes fed and otherwise assisted on the way by maharajahs or other wealthy people who perform these deeds as acts of piety (Fig. XX).

We have shown elsewhere that begging is a universal practice among many classes in the Orient, and takes a heavy economic toll from the people. Their philosophy of philanthropy is that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and thus great numbers of mendicant holy men and needy people furnish ample opportunity for sacrificial giving. Funerals, holy days, and other occasions of joy and sorrow, make exacting economic demands upon people who can ill afford to accede to them; but duty, custom, and public opinion are hard taskmasters. Likewise lawsuits, evidently, in some cases, serving somewhat as community entertainment, take a heavy toll of the family income in certain sections.<sup>a</sup> Dacoities, thefts, communal conflicts, conflicts growing out of the swaraj movement, bribes, etc., in recent years have resulted in much expense; yet one wonders if the amount of lawlessness is as great in India as in the average city of America.

In viewing the large and persistent expenditures for social purposes, an Indian economist concludes that any economic improvement of the country should begin with the reform of social customs and ceremonies which call for such a large and unproductive expenditure of income. It is obvious that largely because of slavish adherence to custom, social festivities are the chief cause of new debts and the chief impediment to the payment of old debts. But it is also obvious that this, or any other reform that impinges so fundamentally upon the age-old customs and beliefs of the people, will be slow of realization.

<sup>a</sup>Darling, M. L., *The Punjab Possesst*, pp. 72-73.

## Chapter XII

### INDIAN MARKETS

India, like other countries, maintains a marketing structure for the exchange, purchase, and sale of commodities. These, perhaps, may not be as elaborate or as extensive as the markets in the highly commercialized urban centers of the West, but under Indian conditions and for Indian use they serve their purpose admirably. It is not our aim here, however, to attempt a full description of current Indian markets, systems of credits, or methods of doing business. That would be too great a task for a single chapter. But for the purpose of obtaining further insight into the folkways and the culture of India, we shall turn the spotlight upon two of the marketing structures more or less unique to that country, the shandy and the bazaar.

#### *The Indian Shandy*

The terms *shandy* and *bazaar* are often confused by travellers in India. While both are markets, the two terms are by no means synonymous, especially in South India. The bazaar is a type of market which is usually housed, though it is not always under a roof. It may consist of one or a combination of the following: drygoods, cloth, clothing, jewelry, groceries, and possibly other articles. The shandy, on the other hand, is an open-air public market, though some parts of it may be housed, or at least have a sun shade. Shandys are usually on a large scale, and have a very heterogeneous make-up; in fact, they have some characteristics of the mela described in another chapter. The shandy may contain many of the things sold in a bazaar, but it is also likely to be a market for cattle, sheep, goats, and other livestock usual to the locality. Then there are markets that are hard to classify, because they have characteristics of both the shandy and the bazaar.

The Shandy, which we shall describe in detail later, covers six or eight acres of ground, is owned by the government, is enclosed by a wall, and is rented by the government for a set sum of money



annually. Each man offering anything for sale at the market has to pay a small fee which increases in amount as the size of his business increases. Within the enclosure are sheds erected for the convenience of the salesmen; areas are laid off for the herding of livestock; and sections are assigned to leather sellers and others who may be plying the lowly trades of the outcastes.

The Indian shandy has its near counterparts in the public markets that we have seen on the outskirts of Paris, though the latter offered no livestock for sale. In German and Danish cities visited by us, we have found public squares used one or more days a week for the marketing of farm products, the "catch" of fishermen, and even a certain amount of drygoods and other articles from the city shops. In the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, we once saw an entire city square used as a public market for farm and household products brought from the countryside around that city. Most of the people selling in the market of Lancaster the day we were present were said to be Amish farmers and their families living in the general bailiwick of that city. Cut flowers, loaf bread, cakes, pies, canned goods of many kinds, garden vegetables, butter, cream, dressed poultry, needle-work, etc., made this Lancaster market an interesting place to visit, and, I judge, a good place for the purchaser to save money.

**Description of the Ranipet Shandy.** Let us now describe in some detail the weekly shandy we visited at Ranipet, in South India. This particular shandy was regularly set for Friday, but in reality it lasted from Thursday afternoon until Saturday afternoon. Even then, in some cases, sales had not been effected, so many bullocks and other livestock and merchandise were kept over until Friday of the following week (Fig. XIV).

On Thursday long caravans of bullocks, bullock-drawn two-wheeled carts and juktas (passenger carts), and droves of sheep and goats, began to arrive from far and near. Some of the bullock caravans, it is said, came from distant villages requiring several days' travel. These bullocks were intended for draft purposes only, and many of them had their horns scraped and polished, and sometimes set off with numerous ornaments. It is always in "good style" for bullocks going to a shandy to be decked out in as many ornaments as possible and to look as nearly as possible like their mates with which they are paired. To be thus arrayed is sure to draw the approval of the sight-seers, and probably a fancy price for their owners.

Since it takes several days to reach the shandy from distant points, the drivers camp on the way and either bring forage with

them to feed their stock, or purchase it *en route*. On shandy days, forage is sold at small roadside stations, very much as "hot-dogs" and gasoline are sold in America. When the livestock is brought to the shandy, it is either tethered to stakes, or closely herded. At the shandy the Friday morning I was present, I estimated that there were 1,000 to 1,200 bullocks on the grounds. There were also probably 100 to 150 sheep.

Vegetables of many varieties and qualities, cooked goods of an equally heterogeneous nature, dried fish that "smelt to heaven," leather, cloth in the bolt, hardware, a great variety of images of the gods, sugar-cane stalks, bamboo stalks for basketry and bamboo sprouts for cooking, limes and similar fruits, peanuts by the bushel, salt (black or brown) by the bushel, ashes for smearing the face on worship and feast days, pottery, almanacs setting forth auspicious hours and days for doing nearly everything an Indian has to do, leaves from certain trees sold in bunches for salad, palm leaves for rice and curry plates, garlic and onions to season the food and to "improve one's breath," peppers of many varieties and potencies, sticky sweet drinks dipped from open vessels to slake the thirst of the "ostentatious wealthy", copper and brass ware of various kinds, buttons, beads, bangles, and heaven knows what else, were sold or traded here. These goods were usually heaped up, or otherwise displayed on the bare ground or on dirty cloths spread on the ground. Often the barefooted merchants and their customers scarcely had room to find their way among this conglomerate display of goods. A beggar with running sores, or a holy man with dirty slime of some sort smeared on his face and beard, would hold out a piteous hand for some smelly dried fish (I'd give them all these fish if they would but carry them away immediately!), or a handful of puffed rice. The would-be buyers, often with filthy clothes and dirty hands, would paw over everything that interested them, whether or not they wanted to buy; and the flies by the millions swarmed over the cooked goods. It would take one with western standards of hygiene a month and a day to get hungry enough to eat at a shandy like this; and it would take nearly as long to get hungry after having attended a shandy. But our Indian friends seemed to enjoy the excitement of the shandy and the food provided there. Sugar-cane joints by the hundreds were eaten raw; fly-specked dried fish, cookies, and like food were devoured on the spot; and even if a passerby had trampled, barefoot, upon a batch of peanuts or puffed rice, these articles of food did not lose thereby their sustaining value! However, we cannot consistently criticize too much the seeming lack of sanitary protection of articles of food at an Indian shandy, because we in America have had to pass pure food and



drug laws and have had to provide a corps of inspectors to insure even a moderate obedience to these laws.

The shandy provides far more in an economic way than the mere sale or exchange of goods. Certain services are performed as well. For example, if, while attending the shandy, you should feel the need of a new dress or suit of clothes, you can have it made on the spot, for several groups of tailors with barefoot driven sewing machines and a coterie of boys doing hand stitching are present and ready to convert a gaudy piece of red, yellow, or any other "attractively" colored goods into almost any sort of garment you wish. Their charges are reasonable, being the equivalent of 50 to 75 cents for a two-piece suit for a man; and in all fairness to these tailors, I must say their work, on the whole, is good indeed. And no doubt other artisans, fortune-tellers, professional people, and politicians find the shandys desirable places to visit, on suitable occasions.

**Educational Values of the Shandy.** The Indian shandy is more than a mere economic device or structure. It is a social and educational institution as well. Even though the diversity of languages and the illiteracy so common to the masses prove to be serious barriers to trade, they are not absolute in their effect. The shandy that brings people from far and near tends, to some extent, to overcome these handicaps. For example, farmers from a given language area may send some of the local men who know two or more dialects to the shandy for them, or employ them to accompany them if the shandy is located in a different language area. Thus the opportunity is afforded for a real exchange of ideas at the shandy, and on the way to and from it, though, no doubt, much of this sort of exchange is of a sensational and erroneous nature. But the educational value of the shandy also lies in discovering what the market demands as to kind, quality, and price of goods. The farmer who has good commodities for sale at fair prices, even in India, out-classes his shiftless or ignorant neighbor. It is the skinny, tubercular pair of bullocks that brings the low prices of 30 to 50 rupees, while the well-matched pair of healthy, well-fed bullocks may bring as much as 300 to 375 rupees. This fact cannot escape the notice of even a very stupid fellow. Yet there are vast numbers of diseased and ill-fed livestock thrown upon the market for what they will bring, and even this sort of offering will find a purchaser. The socializing value of the shandy is further shown in the more or less free intermingling of the different castes and religions. Even the outcaste may be found here; and the Mohammedan has articles he will gladly sell a Hindu; and the Hindu will sell the Mohammedan or the Christian anything he will purchase.

The fact that the shandy has such a wide patronage, both geographically and socially, shows its great appeal to the people. It is probable that the average villager who patronizes it may not sense very clearly its educational and its socializing values, but Government through its various agencies, the schools, missions, and business organizations generally, should sense very clearly these potential values. The drawing power of the shandy placed at the service of programs for promoting sounder hygiene in the homes and the villages and for promoting more ethical business practices generally, at the same time could be used for attaining its primary purpose for the barter and sale of economic goods. How to do this without killing its drawing power is a vital problem.

**Factors that may alter the Shandy.** Within the next three or four decades, many changes may occur, even in this staid land, that may undermine the shandy in its present form. One thing that will probably figure most powerfully in this transformation is improved means of transportation and communication. Now the farmers bring "on the hoof" livestock to the shandy from long distances. This is hard on the animals, and is time-consuming for the drivers. The auto-truck and the railway, when generally made available, will ultimately eliminate much of this. Though dry-goods, groceries, lumber, and farm products destined to most inland villages remote from railways are, for the most part, yet transported by the two-wheeled bullock carts and camel caravans, the day of a more rapid means of transportation is at hand. At the time of our visit to this particular shandy a number of the people attending had come by automobile. As stated elsewhere, motor-busses for passenger traffic have already appeared in many sections of the country, and train services connect most of the important cities. If rapid transportation should be generally adopted, it would not only eliminate the long treks on foot, but would probably discourage the raising of bullocks for market, and thereby rob the shandy of its most important drawing card,—the bullocks purchased and sold for transportation and farm work.

The telephone, if widely installed, also might tend to spread quickly the quotations of prices in the city and central markets, and thus reduce the time-consuming bartering of the shandy. However, this is a remote possibility, as there are today outside of the larger cities but few telephones in India. But after we have taken due account of these possible changes, we do not look forward to a quick elimination of the shandy as a marketing structure. So those of my readers who may wish to experience the thrill of attending an Indian shandy will have opportunity to do so, no doubt, for a long time to come.



*The Indian Bazaar*

The Indian bazaar, like the "store" in western countries, varies a great deal from place to place, as to elegance of the structure which houses it, as to the variety, quality, and the arrangement of the articles offered for sale, and as to the cleanliness of the surroundings. Some of the large city department stores of India look very much, in every respect, like similar department stores in western countries. And the little village bazaars are not wholly unlike some of the cruder small groceries in our own backward rural communities. My observations of the Indian bazaars thus extend from the large city stores and shops all the way to the bazaars of small inland villages among some of the more backward peoples.

**A Bazaar Section of the City of Bombay.** In order to begin our description, let us visit one of the older native business centers of Bombay. It was a fine day, for it was November 5, and the monsoon with its time of rain and mist had passed, to be followed by clear, dry weather. Though it was November, the temperature was such that we were compelled to wear the lightest of summer clothing. Our Hindu and Mohammedan friends, with but rare exceptions, were barefoot; men, women, and children were scantily dressed after the manner of their several castes, and were milling about in the narrow, dirty streets of this part of the city. They all, as by magic, seemed to swarm about our little group of visiting Americans, and began to "jabber" in different dialects, and a few in English. Surely we were in the midst of a strange people; but, evidently, we were the strangers, the objects of curiosity, as I shall relate in further detail.

First, let us make a brief survey of the part of the city in which, for the moment, we found ourselves. Standing in a small open square, we noted that narrow, crooked streets led off in many directions. Seeing an imposing Mohammedan mosque down one of these streets, shining resplendently white and rearing its towers serenely to the sky, we selected this street as our first place of adventure for the morning. The women of our visiting group wished to purchase some steamer rugs for our bed rolls; so they left a gentleman companion and me free to take a few photographs and to "poke about" the bazaars.

A thing that first impressed us by its numbers was the two-wheeled carts drawn by pairs of humped-backed bullocks. These passed almost continuously, both in caravans and in segregated groups of two to four or five. Some of these carts were loaded with brick, others with gravel, others with farm products, others with boxed merchandise including trailers bearing crated American automobiles. Yet others were tongas carrying passengers, and when



FIG. XV. A HINDU BURIAL GROUND, CALCUTTA. Funerals and the succession of ceremonies usually connected therewith are an important source of expense and debt.





they had an open get-a-way, the little "holy bullocks" to which they were hitched would scamper along at the rate of ten miles or more per hour. It is surprising how fast these bullocks can go when the driver twists their tails vigorously! The driver usually sat on the "tongue" of the cart just between the tails of the two bullocks, where he had easy access to the kinked tails of his animals. This sounds cruel and crude, but it is the customary way of "cranking a car" and "getting up speed" in the most common means of conveyance in the smaller cities and villages in this country. Once in a great while a horse hitched to a two-wheeled cart or victoria would glide by; but horses in this part of the world are scarce, even to the point of appearing curious when seen upon the streets. The humped-backed bullock is the successful rival of the horse in this country.

Hawkers, half-naked, carrying baskets of fruit, cooked goods, odd pieces of wearing apparel, postcards, and an assortment of cheap fountain pens, pocket knives, and what-not, assailed us on every hand. Most knew enough English to mention the price and to sing the praise of their wares. I was very careful as to the whereabouts of my pocketbook, for I remembered that one of our American group some days previously had lost his purse with nearly all the money he had, and that the crowded street is a select picking ground for light-fingered artists of the East. To escape this pestiferous group of "merchants" and beggars, we entered a "stall",—not the kind in which the ox is fed, but the kind in which a husband is fleeced, if his wife is out on a marketing orgy,—to see how the ladies were getting on with their purchases. Here was on display an assorted lot of bolted goods of various kinds, and many manufactured articles such as the rugs desired by our ladies. Three or four men salesmen would assist in getting the articles out of their various cubicles for display, but only one did the bargaining. The neighboring salesmen, sitting on their mats in front of their stalls and drawing upon their *hookahs* (water-pipes), evidently were pleased to see the visiting "sahibs" and "memsahibs" look their way. The first price asked would be several times the value of the article. If the purchaser were a good bargainer and evinced an inclination to go elsewhere, reductions in price would be made, one after another, until the prospective buyer either bought or went away. While the ladies were bargaining, one of the helpers who knew a little English plied me with personal questions. He wished to know how many wives and how many children I had; he asked if I believed in swaraj, and inquired about many other matters.

These stalls were close to one another, facing upon the same narrow street or common alley, and thus the merchants could pool



their opinions in regard to the customer who had the audacity to have each of them take out his goods for display, without making a purchase! Even a patient Hindu finds such cold curiosity on the part of a would-be customer hard to bear. A brief stroll back along a row of stalls, brought us to a tailoring establishment. There was little light and less ventilation here. Two Singer sewing machines of an old model were in evidence, and were pedaled with bare feet; and the cutting table was merely the floor. A cooking establishment occupied one of these dark "cubby holes", and just back of it was a foul toilet!

Leaving this medley of gaudy colors, squatting salesmen, and bad odors, we strolled into another busy native section, the silver merchants' or jewelers' quarter. Here was something to challenge the imagination. Stored in buildings representative of all types, from crude cow-shed shacks to gaudy jewelers' parlors, was jewelry that dazzled the eye,—the most exquisite gold and silver chains, pendants set with precious stones, finger and toe rings, bracelets and anklets. We have mentioned in other chapters how India absorbs so much of the gold and silver mined throughout the world, and how so much of this precious metal is used for personal ornaments, especially by her women. It is little wonder that this jewelry is so attractive to them, for this dazzling display of jewelry soon attracted to our side the women folk of our group who had been shopping at the cloth bazaars. Our reverie was soon broken by such ominous sighs as, "Oh, it's so beautiful!" "Do let me price this one!" "Isn't that pendant gorgeous!" A tactful and immediate retreat was evidently the counsel of wisdom on the part of the men of our group who did not wish to become bankrupt before fairly beginning a several-months' sojourn in this interesting country.

**The Musar Bazaar.** Before closing, we should write a few words about a country bazaar. Our party, while passing through the village of Musar, in the Central Provinces, found a public sale in progress. The villagers for miles around were arriving, some afoot and others riding in their bullock tongas. In the absence of housing, and as to general arrangement of the goods, this reminded us of a shandy; probably it should be so designated. Here upon the ground was displayed a number of needle-made articles; there was a farmer sitting on his feet folded under him beside a bushel or so of sorghum seed spread upon a cloth on the ground; over here another man had a few oranges to sell; down there another had a few bunches of dried grass to sell for bullock feed; across there a farmer had a few scraggly goats; and yet over there were several families who had earthen water jars for sale. Though the afternoon was yet young, we departed to be met by people com-

ing from all directions bringing their wares to be sold; however, in nearly every case it was the woman who was doing the real labor connected with bringing to market the family's products and taking home their purchases. The same was true in the orange market of the city of Nagpur, where baskets of oranges to be shipped by train were carried on the heads of coolie women to the railway station. Our last view of the bazaar itself was that of a number of women arriving carrying huge bundles on their heads, a number of men sitting on their feet about some display of farm products, a number of bullock teams lying about in a disorderly way, and a number of querulous goats ambling about in the midst of an eternal hubbub. This particular market, however, seemed mostly for the purpose of exchange of goods, as we saw but very little money pass in the transactions.

The village bazaars vary greatly, as to type of business, with the different sections of the country. For example, up in the Himalayan Mountain region of Darjeeling, where we spent a month's time, we found yak cheese for sale, an article of food never seen in southern or central India; but we did not see exhibited here sugar cane stalks and many other farm products usually found in season in parts of the country to the south. The market in Darjeeling, in some respects, both as to the variety of goods and their artistic arrangement, was like the city-square markets of the West mentioned in the earlier part of this chapter. Only the Indian bazaars in this case displayed jewelry, numerous cheap articles after the fashion of our cheapest ten-cent stores, curios of various kinds, etc. In other bazaars close by were some of the finest oriental rugs and tapestries one could imagine, as well as fine furs, fine jewelry, and in fact about everything that a hill station lying between the Afghan border to the west and the Chinese border to the east could reasonably be expected to have. Here we purchased a beautiful Baluchistan rug, a Mount Everest fox fur, a Nepalese *kukri* (hooked sword), a Buddhist prayer wheel, a hookah (water pipe), and a number of other mementoes of this interesting land.

One thing more might be said of the bazaar in India. As in the traditional small country stores of our own country, where cracker-barrel philosophers gather to "fix" the government and to play checkers and loaf, the village bazaar is a social center. One often finds people idling about, obviously with no intention whatever of buying anything. There is usually among this gentry much talk, and I have on occasion seen considerable horseplay among the people. Once, while visiting a village in South India, I noticed some young men helping themselves to a merchant's sweetmeats and fruit while he, good naturedly, tried to get them to pay for the



goods. Evidently his patience became threadbare and he began to dip water from a tub behind the counter and throw it upon his tormentors. An altercation almost resulted.

Thus, in reflecting upon the shandy and the bazaar, as marketing structures in India, one recognizes in them far more than mere devices for carrying on business; they are educational and socializing agencies as well. Here the business of daily life is carried on; here people from far and near meet and exchange ideas as well as goods; here caste and outcaste, the learned and the ignorant, the native and an occasional foreigner, meet and thereby dissolve some of the distinctions that for ages have separated the social order into castes. With the centuries of past generations back of them, they become thoroughly integrated with the entire life of the people, and to the discerning observer, become excellent reflectors of the culture of this great country.

## Chapter XIII

### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF INDIA

The reader, no doubt, has begun to realize something of the close interplay between the economic and the socio-cultural factors of contemporary Indian life. Thus in our discussion of caste, village organization, labor systems, health, recreation, illiteracy, diversity of languages, and a number of other socio-cultural aspects of Indian life, we have, at the same time, by indirection, been discussing factors that affect the economic life of the country. It is our purpose in this chapter to develop this idea further, placing the emphasis upon certain other factors that have not thus far been discussed at length. However, in making our selection of factors we have singled out two for separate treatment in subsequent chapters; namely, Indian cultural attitudes toward the cow, and toward wild animals.

#### *The Population and the Land*

In a former chapter we showed that the population of India is becoming progressively more agricultural in composition, and that under rather static agricultural policies and methods, a greater population pressure is growing upon the land for subsistence. We shall pursue this topic from a slightly different angle, without unnecessary repetition.

**The Natural Increase of Population.** Almost any question of Indian society, if followed at length, leads to a consideration of the natural increase of the population, i. e., the net increase of births over deaths. The following figures taken from census reports of British India give some ideas of the situation, but census reports are not altogether reliable, owing to probable discrepancies in the enumeration and recording of births and deaths.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Statesman's Year-Book, 1933*, and other issues, Macmillan & Co., Ltd.



## THE NATURAL INCREASE OF INDIA'S POPULATION

(From the Statesman's Year-Book 1933)

Census periods (averages)	Ratio of births per 1000 population	Ratio of deaths per 1000 population	Natural increase per 1000 population
1885-1890	35.83	27.44	8.39
1891-1900	35.43	31.31	4.12
1901-1910	38.18	33.94	4.24
1911-1920	36.93	34.13	2.80
1921-1930	35.99	26.85	9.14

Taking these figures at their face value, it appears that India has a very high birth rate, and also a very high death rate,— a death rate so high in fact as to almost balance the birth rate, at least up to the 1931 Census report. In comparing the Indian birth rate with that of a number of other leading European and Asiatic countries, in the accompanying table, we also find that India excels all these countries, with the exception of European Russia and some of the Balkan States. In 1901-10 she even excelled Japan and Italy, two of the larger and more populous modern countries. Likewise, we note in the 1901-10 column of the following table that India's death rate is the highest of all the countries listed. In this respect European Russia is her nearest rival with a death rate of 29.9 to India's 33.9 per thousand population. We have not worked out similar comparisons for the decade ending 1931, but the student of world populations, as related to problems of public policy and international relations, will find the working out of these comparisons both interesting and instructive.

### BIRTH AND DEATH RATES IN SOME EUROPEAN AND ASIATIC COUNTRIES

(Per Thousand Inhabitants)<sup>2</sup>

	Born Living			Died		
	1881- 1890	1891- 1900	1901- 1910	1881- 1890	1891- 1900	1901- 1910
Germany	36.8	36.1	32.9	25.1	22.2	18.7
Austria	38.0	37.4	34.7	29.6	26.7	23.3
Hungary	43.9	40.5	37.0	32.4	29.8	25.7
France	23.9	22.1	20.6	22.1	21.5	19.4
Italy	37.7	35.0	32.7	27.3	24.2	21.6
England and Wales	32.5	29.9	27.2	19.2	18.2	15.4
Scotland	32.3	30.2	28.4	19.2	15.5	16.6
Ireland	23.4	23.1	23.2	17.9	18.3	17.4
Servia	44.9	41.6	38.9	25.2	26.8	23.4
Roumania	41.4	40.6	39.8	27.5	29.1	25.8
Bulgaria	—	39.3	41.5	—	25.8	23.2
Russia (European)	48.6	48.7	46.7	34.3	33.8	29.9
Netherlands	34.2	32.5	30.5	21.0	18.4	15.2
Finland	35.0	32.2	31.1	21.1	19.7	17.9

<sup>2</sup>From Population in India by B. Narayan. Statistical Abstracts. British India.

Denmark	31.9	30.2	28.6	18.6	17.4	14.2
Belgium	30.2	28.9	26.1	20.6	19.1	16.4
Switzerland	28.5	28.1	26.9	21.0	19.0	16.7
Norway	31.0	30.3	27.5	17.1	16.2	14.2
Sweden	21.1	27.1	25.8	16.9	16.4	14.9
Spain	36.2	34.8	34.4	31.7	29.5	25.2
Portugal	—	30.6	31.7	—	21.3	20.2
Japan	27.2	29.8	32.0	19.9	20.9	20.7
India	35.8	35.4	38.2	27.4	31.3	33.9

Wadia and Joshi, in their *Wealth of India*, make a comparative study of the death rate among infants in a number of countries, as follows:<sup>3</sup>

### INFANT DEATH RATE IN A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES

(From Wadia and Joshi, "Wealth of India")

Countries	Death rate, per 1000 children under one year of age (1902-12 Av.)
Sweden	84
Scotland	116
England and Wales	127
France	132
Germany	186
Hungary	207
<i>Indian Provinces</i>	
Madras	199
Bengal	270
Behar and Orissa	304
Punjab	306
Bombay	320
United Provinces	352

Taking India as a whole, up to 1921, it is estimated that about one-fifth of her infants did not live to be one year of age; and also it is estimated for this date that the average expectancy of life in India was only about twenty-five years, as compared with fifty-eight in the United States. However, an analysis of the 1931 Census shows an increase of thirty-four millions in India's population, during the decade ending 1931, or the phenomenal increase of 10.6 per cent, which may indicate a partial mastery of the pestilences and famines that have mercilessly decimated her population in bygone days. But the high death rate shown heretofore probably indicates a lack of stamina caused by undernourishment as much as it indicates a lack of mastery of the laws of hygiene and preventive medicine; so that any increase in the population, unless accompanied by commensurate improvements in agriculture and other means of win-

<sup>3</sup>See further discussions on health, birth rate, and death rate in India in the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, appropriate sections.



ning a livelihood, is apt, in the long run, to leave the country in a worse condition than ever before. This discouraging point of view is expressed by Professor Saunders, an economist of South India, when he writes: "It is indeed one of the discouragements of the Indian situation that every effort to improve the means of subsistence is at once more than offset by an increase of population which defeats every attempt to raise the average standard of living."<sup>4</sup> This is a situation that should make a thoughtful appeal to many relief agencies seemingly not greatly interested in the improvement of the economic conditions of the masses.

Emigration, industrialization, and voluntary birth control are other possible alternatives toward easing the population pressure on the land; but, as shown elsewhere, present trends do not indicate a wide use of these alternatives. Moreover, allowing famine, pestilence and war to run their course unabated is another alternative; but India's foreign friends do not wish to permit this sort of thing. Regardless of the theoretical aspects of the question and the academic proposals of the well-wishers of India, the immediate aspect of the problem is that of a competition between agricultural science on the one hand, with the creation of an adequate food supply as its objective, and on the other hand, medical science and other agencies whose objectives are to conserve life. The latter, aided by increasing birth rate, appears to be winning the contest. But as greatly as the population presses the land for subsistence under present conditions, it is probable that India has the potential natural resources of land, minerals, metals, and precious stones to support her population on higher standards of living, if the masses could but be induced to change certain of their customs and points of view.

### *The Subdivision and Fragmentation of Land*

**The Role of Inheritance.** Agricultural land constitutes one of the most important forms of private property in India; but its value and its productiveness are largely vitiated because of excessive subdivision or fragmentation. This is due largely to the laws of inheritance. In compliance with the normal functioning of custom and the laws of inheritance, varying somewhat among different sections and peoples, the property of a man at his death is or may be divided equally among his sons. It follows that the size of the family holdings thus becomes smaller with every division of the ancestral property; but what is worse, for the purpose of insuring equality in the value of the shares, each piece of land is divided so that each son not only gets his share of the total holding, but also a share of

<sup>4</sup>Saunders, A. J., *Land and Rural Economics*, p. 129.

each different quality of land comprising a holding. This leads to excessive fragmentation of holdings into a number of small, irregularly shaped plots, often widely scattered throughout a village community. This practice extends to all parts of the country and its results are uniformly pernicious, so far as good agricultural practice is concerned.

The holdings, as a rule, are so small and consist of such a large number of fragments that most of them are uneconomical to cultivate. For example, in Bengal the average holding of cultivated land is only about 3.12 acres, in Assam 2.96 acres, in the United Provinces 2.51 acres, in the Punjab 9 acres, and for the country as a whole 5 acres. But these small holdings are split up into many smaller tracts, as found for example, in the village of Pimpila Soudhagar, by Dr. Mann.<sup>5</sup> Here there were 146 holdings split up into 560 plots, of which no less than 178 were smaller than an acre, and some were only tiny spots too small to be of any appreciable economic value in farming.

Elsewhere we have stated some of the disadvantages of the fragmentation of land, and we might here add Dr. Mann's summary. He says: "It [fragmentation] destroys enterprise, results in an enormous wastage of labor, leads to a very large loss of land owing to boundaries, makes it impossible to cultivate holdings intensively . . . and prevents the possibility of introducing outsiders with more money as tenant farmers or as purchasers of good agricultural property."<sup>6</sup> We should also add that it discourages the use of labor-saving machinery, the digging of irrigation wells, and the adoption of other good agricultural practices. The evils of fragmentation might be largely overcome if the farmers of a locality would eliminate boundaries and farm on a joint-stock system of organization; or the evils might be reduced if the farmers of a locality would raise on contiguous holdings the same kind of crops and cooperate in other ways. One student of the subject asks the academic question: Would the Soviet system of collective farming solve the problem? Of course, in certain places where the land of the village is operated under a form of communal ownership, an approach to the Soviet plan is attained, in a limited way; but all these above-named forms of cooperation do not seem to be widely practiced. The evils of fragmentation might be lessened if the soil were carefully prepared and fertilized, and an intensive type of cultivation practiced as in many of the countries of Europe. However, an expansive type of farming generally maintains, resulting in low yields.

<sup>5</sup>Land and Labor in a Deccan Village (Second Study), p. 44, Oxford Univ. Press, 1921.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 42, 54; also for a more extended summary of fragmentation, see the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV., pp. 74-75.



Many students of Indian agricultural economy recognize that fragmentation, as practiced, is unsound, and are hoping for a solution to the problem. Some voluntary efforts have been made to consolidate holdings; but thus far, the movement has made but little progress. It has also been suggested that the consolidation of holdings is a matter that requires legislation; but such legislation if passed, whether permissive or compulsory in nature, would first have to overcome the resistance and the inertia of age-old custom before making any tangible accomplishments toward eliminating the evil of excessive fragmentation.

**Economic Gain Not the Primary Purpose of Land Holding.** In viewing almost any phase of Indian agriculture, the informed observer is sure to be impressed by the fact that village life rests primarily upon a social and a cultural basis, rather than upon an economic basis. The chapters on the village, the caste system, and the family, especially point to this fact; and Dr. Wilson, who has recently made an investigation in Indian village life, very correctly attests to this fact. He writes: "The village economy is not one of finance. The Indian cultivator of the soil has not been won to commercialism, except in limited and intensely exploited sections . . . . In India it is customary for the land to be used as a place of abode, not as an economic commodity. When men have inherited land, and live by the land, — not buying it, or selling it, or valuing it in cash, — then land is a social agent rather than an economic value."<sup>7</sup> And, in like manner, Mayhew observes: "But occupation to a Hindu is not the sole nor even the primary aim of life. His object is not to earn a living but to live happily and well, and the good life is that which is defined, made possible and restricted by the rights and duties, the customs and ceremonies, of his caste."<sup>8</sup> Thus outside of cities and certain other rural areas dominated by western influences, the real estate business of India, in terms of land purchase and sale, professional real estate agents, land banks, and the like, is negligible. Even in the cities it does not take the form or the scope as in many countries of the West.

This fact is difficult for the average westerner to understand, because he has been accustomed to a civilization characterized by a capitalistic form of economic organization,—to a society dominated by ideas of specialization, corporate organization, big finance, profits and loss, speculation, mechanization, and volume production.<sup>9</sup> In America, even farmers, in radical contrast to Indian agriculturists, often engage in speculation in land; and per-

<sup>7</sup>Wilson, Warren H., *former cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup>Mayhew, Arthur, *The Education of India*, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup>See Rugg, H. O., *The Great Technology*.

haps most farmers have a price on their land and home, which, if paid, would involve the exchange of owners and the removal of residences. Thus, recognizing the fact that village India is highly dominated by things of social and cultural concern, we should not be surprised that her agriculture, or any phase of it, such as her system of landholding, when singled out for special study, is not an exception to the rule, but is dominated by forces and situations not primarily economic in nature.

### *The Semi-Pastoral System of Farming*

The semi-pastoral system of farming, described in a former chapter, is another institution firmly tied by custom to a long past. Thus, as in the occupancy of land for residential purposes, custom has given to non-land owners certain grazing rights that cannot be taken from them at the whim of the landowner. The social significance of this form of livestock farming is also shown by the fact that it is customary for villages to have families, sometimes even separate castes, set aside as herders.

Arguments in favor of this type of livestock farming are: it makes use of waste land and other pasture land without the cost of fencing, and it permits poor villagers and city people to have dairy goats, cows, and other livestock. On the negative side of the account, it is said that this system encourages the keeping of a vast number of worthless animals; adds to the problems of sanitation in the villages and homes; discourages the production and the purchase of adequate feed supplies for livestock; effectually prevents the improvement of livestock through better breeding, because vast numbers of scrub males run with the herds; causes considerable losses to crops through ineffective herding; causes many children to be kept out of school in order to serve as herders; and the herds of livestock filling the public highways become a nuisance to automobilists. This system of farming, being a hybrid between that typical of permanent western agriculture wherein either the crops or the animals are fenced from the other, and the pastoral type of farming practiced by Abraham of old, is deeply rooted in village life and customs. On the whole, it seems uneconomical and a real stumbling block to progress. Those who work for improved village sanitation, agricultural betterment, and a happier general social outlook, will find this traditional system of farming a persistent and a discouraging handicap.

### *Begging*

Begging, as a social institution in India, fits well into a philosophy that places but relatively little store upon a capitalistic



form of social organization. Yet it must be presumed that there is some capital to give to the beggars. Like other age-old social practices of the country, begging has religious sanction. Thus Ayyar explains its integration with ancient orthodox Brahminism: "Till about the age of five, the Brahmin male should be fed and taken care of by his parents. At about five, he is invested with the sacred string, after an initiation ceremony. From that time forward he is bound to shift for himself and not be a burden to his parents. Every man has to pass through four ashrams or stages of life: *Brahmachari*, the stage in which he is supposed to walk in the paths toward knowledge; *Grihasta*, or the house-holder; *Vanaprasta*, a forest dweller; and *Sanyasi*, who gives up everything. Both the *Brahmachari* and the *Sanyasi* live on the charity of others. This practice is not universal, and is dying out."<sup>10</sup>

In remarking further upon the extent of begging and in trying to give it a philosophical sanction, Ayyar continues: "It is a well-known fact that there are more beggars in India than in other parts of the world, and the reason for this is that the Indians generally pay more attention to the development of finer instincts than people of other countries . . . . Fellow beings are helped not so much because they are in difficulties and want, but because it helps the donor to bestow charity more and more freely and heartily each time than before. Deprive a land of its beggars and you deprive its people of one of their opportunities of drawing out their innate feeling of humanity and pity."<sup>11</sup> A Hindu scholar, in discussing the philosophy of begging in India, explained to the writer that it had behind it the same impulse as that which impels Christians to carry out Christ's command in the Sermon on the Mount: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away."<sup>12</sup> In obedience to this command he seemed to think Hindus were better Christians than were many professed Christians in western countries.

In Tibet and other Buddhist countries a large percentage of the population is Llamas or priests whose maintenance is a direct charge upon the charity of the people. Among Hindus, maintaining the caste system often involves feeding the brethren (Brahmins) as well as the pilgrims, the holy men, or anyone else who seems to be in trouble. But such charity, regardless of the spirit in which it is given, is a heavy economic handicap to a poverty-stricken people.

Thus, in the eyes of many people, begging becomes a virtue and even a "trade". On the other hand, regardless of the motive

<sup>10</sup>Ayyar, P. V. J., *South India Customs*, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>12</sup>Matthew 5:42.

or the rationalization by which it is justified, it promotes national poverty and a general loss of self-respect. Yet a missionary who has lived a number of years in India, when remarking upon the subject of begging, states: "I doubt whether the Indians actually are or feel imposed on when giving to beggars. Their interest is in giving and not so much in the character of the person receiving the gift." However, begging enables the charlatans, often in the guise of holy men, to impose upon a gullible people; and parents have been known to mutilate the bodies of their children in order to add to their appeal in begging. Begging, according to western standards, also inculcates in the masses a spirit of defeatism that is repugnant to good citizenship and that makes ineffectual the most devoted efforts toward social improvement and nation-building.

### *Social Conflict*

Social conflict seems to be an innate attribute of human nature, wherever found. Grounded in original nature, it is brought about by the clash of cultures and dissimilar personalities. However, and for whatever causes instigated in village India, social conflict is a phenomenon with which the Christian and other constructive agencies must deal. Thus a working knowledge of the psychology of village life, as it assumes patterns of conflict and social disturbance, is a necessary prerequisite to the success of enterprises committed to social development.

**Causes of Social Conflict.** By implication and indirection we have thus far presented a number of remote and more or less indirect causes of social conflict in Indian villages. Among these are economic factors creating insecurity for the necessities of life, such as: the small size and the fragmentation of holdings, the uncertainty of crops because of lack of water, uncertainty of crops and animal products on account of pests and diseases, uneconomical methods of farming, the burden of debt, economic wastes, and diseases. Also among these irritants and creators of a state of mental irrationality are certain social factors that threaten or otherwise seriously retard the economic and the social status of the villagers, such as: overpopulation, certain aspects of the caste system, illiteracy, custom and tradition, religious differences, heterogeneity of languages, inadequate educational institutions, and the agitation of impecunious lawyers and other unsafe leaders. These factors, augmented in their influence by the effects of a tropical climate, the dangers of pestilence, poisonous serpents, and wild animals, as well as a love for drama and self-expression, have made the Hindus, especially, fond of disputation and court action.<sup>13</sup> An observer of sev-

<sup>13</sup>The amount of litigation was discussed in a previous chapter; see also the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV., pp. 107-9.



eral years' residence in India, remarking upon the ready tendency of the Indians to court action, places the blame to some extent upon the existing court system. He says: "The use of British courts at a considerable distance from the village is an encouragement to litigation . . . In the old village panchayat the facts were known or could be easily discovered. This is next to impossible under the present system . . . One of the great failures in India of the British method has been the breakdown of the village system. Even the *chaukidar* (watchman) of the village is not a protector of the village under control of village authority. He is the representative of the British 'Raj'!"

When, in addition to these more indirect and remote causes of social conflict, we think of communal riots, the conflicts arising from picketing in the swaraj movement,<sup>14</sup> and the many personal and group differences settled by the panchayats and the mission "sahibs", it would appear that India needs to discover the paths to social peace. This state of affairs is a direct and insistent challenge to all of those agencies having for their objectives nation-building and character-building.

### *Religion and Custom*

**Relationship of Hindu Religion and Custom.** India is probably one of the most religious countries of historical record. The student of Indian affairs is impressed by the outward habiliments and practices of a religious nature. Thus he may see throughout the land magnificent temples, many of them exhibiting some of the finest stone and marble carving in the world; and all along the highways, even in the market places, may be found a great number of smaller shrines and idols. In northern Indian Buddhist prayer flags may be seen floating from house tops, tree tops and over bridges and ravines. Sometimes these flags are adjusted to a water wheel turned by a stream, the idea being that movement given to these prayer flags will add to their potency in warding off evil spirits. If one is in a Mohammedan locality, he can hear the weird periodical calls to prayer. Holy men grotesquely dressed and smeared with white ashes and paint continually insinuate their privileged presence into almost all public gatherings, and the troubled citizens or the fanatical *sadhus* are continually making long and weary pilgrimages to Benares or some other holy place to spend a time in contemplation and to gaze on the image of their patron gods. And the masses engage in the observance of holidays and religious festivals, sometimes in a way that would shock the sense of decency of an uninitiated westerner. All these, in various direct and

<sup>14</sup>This might be expanded to include what some term "opposition to a foreign power."

indirect ways, are woven into the beliefs, customs, and routines of daily life. Thus Ayyar, an Indian writer states, "Not even a single one of the Hindu customs, however unimportant and simple, is without a religious basis or principle behind it . . . Hindus believe that hosts of invisible beings dwell side by side with them in their houses, taking their stand over certain places and objects. This fact is emphasized by the observance of certain ceremonials. Some of these entities and forces are said to be in the streets outside houses during the day time, and as soon as night comes on, enter the houses . . . to rest during the night. All good entities are said to love light and to abhor darkness, and all evil denizens of the invisible world to abhor light and love darkness. Thus people take good care to have lights burning in shut-up houses to prevent entry by entities of ill repute."<sup>15</sup>

As to how religious beliefs are interwoven with custom in the care of the sick, Ayyar continues: "Contagious diseases that are looked upon as the results of attack of germs and microbes in countries other than India, are looked upon as the work of certain deities by the Hindus of South India . . . People whose children are attacked with smallpox or measles, try not to anger the devatas (spirits) behind these diseases, but to propitiate them. Medicine or drugs, if administered, are considered to displease the devatas who accordingly may make the disease more virulent."<sup>16</sup> Thus, formulas are developed for propitiating or for taking advantage of the gods, and these become the folkways and the mores of later generations.

In attempting to explain why Hindu custom should be venerated, Ayyar exhorts his readers to bear in mind that these customs have been originated by very great men among the forefathers, and hence ought not to be lightly disposed of; and he further quotes the declaration of Sister Nivedita that, "Custom is the jewel casket of humanity."<sup>17</sup>

**Religion vs. Progress.** When viewing the role that the religions of India play in the civilization of that country, one is impressed with the truthfulness of the statement that, "It makes a great deal of difference what one believes." Darling, in commenting upon the statement of the Poet Tagore that "Indian civilization is penetrated with an abiding sense of the infinite", declares that progress is essentially concerned with the finite that bids a man multiply his possessions in order that he may add to his comfort. The latter, he continues, is a doctrine that makes but little appeal to the cultivator who feels, with the experience of the cen-

<sup>15</sup>Ayyar, P. V. J., *South India Customs*, pp. ix, 11.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.



turies back of him, that however many his possessions, he cannot add much to his comfort in a climate that sooner or later destroys all effort and wealth.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, we may add that the economic handicaps imposed by custom and the requirements of a hand type of self-sufficient farming tend to discourage thrift and forehandedness. While thrift and economic planning may not be the sole factors in a capitalistic and industrial form of economic organization, they are important limiting factors. But, as previously noted, Indian society is traditionally based upon a social and religious, rather than upon a purely economic plan of organization; hence it reacts somewhat differently to economic questions than do countries dominated by capitalistic urges. Therefore, according to Darling, the Indian cultivator traditionally tends to guard and preserve, rather than to improve and enlarge his economic possessions, and thus Indian society has tended to be stable and contented rather than progressive and rich. This frame of mind makes ineffectual and difficult all efforts toward agricultural and industrial education, political efficiency, cooperative effort other than that imposed by the caste system, and other nation-building improvements. Writing in this vein Macnicol says: "At best it [Hinduism] is beautiful but ineffectual, moving its devotees to sing the name of the god in their devotion or to journey afar to seek his face, but seldom inspiring them with the spirit of others . . . His [the peasant's] aspiration is rendered ineffective by an inhibition . . . Add to this the crushing experience of oppression and injustice, the atmosphere of futility and unreality . . . the absence in their outlook of any source of comfort and strength, and can it seem strange that their condition today in spite of the high qualities of brain and heart that are their heritages, is so unhappy and so desolate? . . . Hinduism is still, as it always has been, a religion that is customary and unprogressive, with little vital relationship with the needs of a life that it proclaims to be an illusion."<sup>19</sup>

Other western critics find in Hinduism an insecure foundation for progress. Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield in commenting upon the social effects of Hinduism declares that: "Hinduism, as a religion and a social system, works toward fatalism, a low social and cultural status for women, a low regard for the value of human life, the perpetuation of a hurtful caste system, and a general lack of ambition."<sup>20</sup> Neill, sensing the discouraging effects of Hinduism and Mohammedanism upon the economic and civic activities of

<sup>18</sup>Darling, M. L., *The Punjab Peasant*, p. 173.

<sup>19</sup>Macnicol, Nicol, *India in the Dark Wood*, pp. 43, 65, 66, Edinburgh House Press, 1926.

<sup>20</sup>Butterfield, Kenyon L., *Christian Missions in Rural India*, pp. 25-26, International Missionary Council, 1920. See the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, quoting these and other writers on the social influence of Hinduism.

the people writes: "Above all, the Indian needs a sense of the worthwhileness of life. Past history, climate, hardships, have been consecrated by religion. 'It is the Will of God (Kismet)', says Islam; 'It is written on my forehead (Karma)', says Hinduism."<sup>21</sup> And Dr. Warren H. Wilson, as noted in the chapter on the Indian Village, sees in the cheerful attitude toward death obviously maintained by the average villager an escape from economic determinism that defeats any possible drift toward an overworked capitalistic social order. It is probable, however, that the average Hindu philosopher or villager might not wholly agree with some of these statements about the inadequacies of his religion, since it seems to give him both spiritual comfort and the source of much philosophical discussion; nor, as shown elsewhere in this volume, would he be likely to give up willingly certain protective and disciplinary values accruing from the caste system, especially, in its *jajmani* connections.

A specific example of how Indian religious belief retards economic progress is the effect of the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul upon agricultural improvement. The essential teaching of this doctrine is that one's soul after death goes to dwell in other incarnations, the desirability of the new incarnation depending upon how well one has observed his caste duties and religious obligations (*Dharma*) in his former incarnation. In the new incarnation, if his life was good, he might be brought up into a higher caste; or if his life was evil, he might be lowered to an out-caste or even to an animal. Thus, orthodox Hindus venerate all animal life, and the cow especially, regarding her more as a member of the family than a creature to be slain for food. This belief has two bad results on agriculture: first, it permits the unmolested multiplication of all sorts of wild animals, many of which are destructive to crops and livestock; second, it leads to the keeping of a vast number of diseased and worthless cattle. Thus Dr. Sam Higginbottom, president of the Allahabad Christian College, estimates that 90 per cent of the cattle of India are a drain on the economic resources of the country and are kept at a loss reaching into millions of rupees annually.<sup>22</sup>

By way of summarizing the effects of the Hindu faith upon the economic life of the country, we quote again from Zimand: ". . . The theory of life as an incurable evil still directs the vast majority of Hindu Indians. Such a doctrine breeds a spirit of resignation, not of challenge; it inspires acquiescence rather than determined effort to overcome the grim conditions of the country."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Neil, Stephen, *Out of Bondage*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>22</sup>Higginbottom, Sam, *The Gospel and the Plow*, p. 69, The Macmillan Co., 1921.

<sup>23</sup>Zimand, Savel, *Living India*, p. 87.



However, the person acquainted with both occidental and oriental cultures, when in a mood of sombreness and pessimism, reflecting upon such things as the recent Great World War, the present economic depression and the frenzied efforts to ease its effects, the corruption in city government, the high rate of homicide and other undesirable characteristics of current western life, particularly in America, will probably conclude that the West has not yet reached the millennium. He may even suggest that Indian serenity and submission, whatever their foundations, have something of value to offer toward bringing to our western countries peace of mind. It does seem that we of the West need a longer-range view of life. Our interest in the transitory, the finite, the materialistic, has led us into deep water. And our western critics may well question whether it is better to kill millions by fratricidal wars, unnecessary automobile accidents, and other lawlessness and greed based on conflicting economic interests, as illustrated by western society, or to kill other millions by freely allowing pestilence, famine, and other methods of destruction to have their way, as exemplified by traditional India.

## Chapter XIV

### THE INDIAN COW

In discussing the Indian cow I wish not only to include the female of the species, but also her husband, brothers, nephews, and sons; for somewhat in contrast with American conditions and practices, as we shall show more fully later, the female of the cow species in India plays a role of distinctly secondary importance to that of the male. This may be a matter of mild surprise to many of our American dairymen who have become so enthusiastic about the food values of milk as to declare in their propaganda that the "cow is the stepmother of the nation", and that one positively cannot be healthy unless he drinks daily a generous amount of milk.

In India, probably as in no other country of the world, cattle are closely integrated with the life of the people; and in noting this fact in some detail in the following pages we shall see some things that appear to be paradoxes, and some things that follow a logical order of procedure. Thus we shall show how cattle are useful to India as a source of power in doing many kinds of work, as a source of fuel, as a source of food, and as objects of veneration.

#### *Cattle as a Source of Power*

**Bullocks on the Farm and on the Road.** The bullock is practically the only source of farm power and means of transportation on the highways. Occasionally one may find a pair of water buffaloes at work in a paddy field, or on the road drawing a cart; occasionally one may see a camel caravan transporting cotton from remote agricultural sections to railway centers; occasionally one may also see a pony-drawn jutka, a two-wheeled cart for passenger service; and in few of the important lumbering regions elephants are used for logging. But aside from these minor exceptions, nearly all the plowing, carting, drawing of water for irrigation, and the transporting of freight from and to railway stations is done by bullocks.

In the long cycles of time lying behind the use of the bullock



as a source of power, but little change has taken place in India. When one walks along the public highways, or observes farm practices in the fields, one may see the patient oxen performing about the same routine under about the same primitive conditions that existed in the days of the early emperors. A pair of oxen under a crude yoke may be drawing a plow, or a two-wheeled, high, springless cart, or may be turning an oil press; and tied to a number of heifers and other young stock, they may be tramping out grain on the earthen threshing floor. However, as a drawer of heavy freight over long distances, the bullock's usefulness may soon have a competitor in the form of the modern motor-trucks. As noted elsewhere, a few of these already have entered the rural passenger service, and it is likely that when improved roads are more widely extended throughout the country and the streams bridged, motor trucks will enter freely into freight transportation.

While the great mass of Indian cattle may rightly be designated as scrubs of a very poor sort, nevertheless certain breeds have been developed for special purposes. For example, there are breeds of trotters that are used mostly for passenger transportation. These cattle are small and active, and for long periods can maintain a gait of from five to seven miles per hour, drawing a two-wheeled covered *jutka* loaded with its usual complement of passengers. The Nellore cow is a fairly large animal, usually white in color, and the females are supposed to be very good dairy animals and the male very good for the yoke. The Sindh is a small reddish or brindled animal, used mostly for rapid transportation purposes, while the Kangayam, usually a larger white or grayish animal, is used mostly for draft purposes. There are other breeds in different parts of the country. The Government, through the maintenance of cattle-breeding farms and the distribution, under special subsidy, of breeding bulls for public service, is attempting to improve the cattle industry in India; but this movement will probably be slow in its results, for the Indian, traditionally, has bred his worst stock and sold his best.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he sees no good reason why he should tamper with nature through the special selection of certain sires for the herd. Here, again, ignorance and age-old custom play an important part in keeping the farmer poverty-stricken.

**The Romance of the Caravan and the Shandy.** We should describe two phases of Indian life in which the draft bullock figures largely and to which there is connected a certain amount of folklore and romance. The first, which we shall describe very briefly, is the long trek by ox-cart. There are roving gypsy caravans, as

<sup>2</sup>India in 1930-31, op. cit. See sections on what Government is doing to improve the livestock of India.

well as groups *en route* to melas or shandys, who make long journeys by this means of conveyance. When night falls, their covered carts, sometimes in large numbers, are parked under the spreading banyan trees by the roadside, while the patient bullocks lie quietly by their loads or graze near by. In like manner, long caravans of freight drawn on huge two-wheeled carts by bullocks pass in the night. Owing to the excessive heat of the day, especially during the warmer seasons of the year, most of this long-distance hauling is done at night and the resting is done under the spreading banyan trees during the day. We have met these caravans at night, the driver of the leading team squatting on the front of the load between the tails of his bullocks, wide-awake to direct the course of the caravan, while the drivers on the succeeding carts, similarly perched upon their loads, were fast asleep.

The shandy is the other phase of Indian life in which the bullock figures somewhat in a romantic way. The shandy, as shown more fully in a previous chapter, is really a large central public market at which the village populace for miles around gathers each week, and to which it brings its farm products, livestock, and products of village industries for barter and sale. In the case of cattle, especially, the shandy, it is said, sometimes draws patronage from a radius of 150 miles. This involves a journey on foot of several days and nights, which gives the caravans opportunity for the experience of fording rivers, procuring food for man and beast, listening to the plaintive notes of a singer who is entertaining his fellow travellers, and to the recounting of the folk-stories in which India so richly abounds. No doubt when those who have thus attended a shandy return to their distant native villages, they are prepared to give an interesting account to their friends of all they have seen and experienced. No doubt many of these stories are highly colored by the imaginative art of the story teller, and they exemplify some the non-economic values of the shandy.

### *Cattle As Source of Fuel*

**Manure Used as Fuel.** A traveller passing leisurely through an average Indian village will probably see cakes of cow-dung plastered against the side of the mud huts. Sometimes these cakes are arranged artistically, and sometimes they are found stacked on the thatched roofs or bedecking, in a conspicuous way, some portion even of the most pretentious houses in the village,—but nearly always for the same purpose,—fuel. Even though a certain amount of watered dung is used weekly as a sort of dressing on the dirt floor of the dwelling, and on the floors and walls as a cleaning agent after a death or a birth, the major use of cow dung



in village India is for fuel. We have visited the burning ghats where the human dead are cremated. Here, frequently, the cremation is done in whole or in part with dung as fuel, though wood is the major fuel for this purpose. A great deal, perhaps most, of the cooking in the chimneyless, crude fireplaces is done with dung fuel. Dung thus used makes a slow, smudgy fire and is preferred by most Indian cooks to wood. In many parts of India, wood for fuel is scarce and very costly. Once, in passing a wood market, we saw a salesman carefully weighing out for a customer a few chips, sticks, and short pieces of wood with a crude pair of old-fashioned steelyards.

**Social and Economic Implications of Dung Burning.** Dung-cake making has certain social as well as economic implications. At almost any time during the cool of the day if one looks out, he may see women or larger girls carrying on their hips or their heads huge baskets that will hold from one and a half to two bushels each. They seem to be hunting for something, and on occasion they will stoop over to pick it up and put it into the baskets. The women, sometimes assisted by children, thus may be out in the fields, on the highways, or at the bazaars in the village; but their work is that of collecting cow dung. After being gathered, the dung is watered down and patted out with the hands into thin cakes about the size of dinner plates. These are either left on the ground for a while to dry, after which they are stood together by twos, or are spattered up against the house to dry (Fig. XI).

The practice of dung-burning is vicious for three major reasons: First, it is degrading to the women and children to be thus employed in the collection and the preparation of this sort of fuel. Of course the average Indian husband would probably not agree with this statement, particularly because Indian society venerates the cow; yet he probably would regard his women socially debased if they cut their hair, as women often do in western countries, and he would probably look askance at their wearing spike-heeled shoes such as fashion sometimes dictates for western women. But, according to western standards, at least, the employment of women in the preparation of dung for fuel indicates a low social status of womanhood. Perhaps we should explain that higher caste women are seldom thus employed. Until the coal deposits of the country are developed and made available to the public, and the folkways of the villagers are so modified as to permit the use of this kind of fuel, cow dung will probably be burned as fuel for ages to come.

Second, burning the manure is a destruction of an important source of plant food. It is estimated that three-fourths of the cow

manure of India is used for fuel instead of being put upon the land as a fertilizer. This is a great economic loss and explains some of the low crop yields.

Third, the use of dung for fuel encourages the keeping of a horde of worthless cattle, or at least cattle of but little value. It is estimated that in British India and the Native States there were, in round numbers in 1928, 185,800,000 cattle, or more than three times as many as in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Very good authority asserts that seventy-five per cent or more of these village cattle are kept primarily for the production of manure for fuel. The implications of this practice as to the problems of health, village sanitation, and agricultural improvement have already been stated, so need not be repeated here.

### *Cattle As a Source of Food*

Beef, veal, milk, curds, buttermilk, cheese, liver, sweetbreads, and other products of the cow, either on the hoof or across the butcher's counter, in western countries constitute an important source of human food. However, as already intimated, the cow is regarded as an exceptionally holy animal by most orthodox caste Hindus. Thus many castes will neither kill a cow for food, nor eat flesh of any kind,—even eggs,—for their religious scruples, backed by age-old custom, forbid them to take life or to eat the flesh of animals. However, the Mohammedans (or at least many of them), and certain outcaste and low caste Hindus, will eat meat, including the flesh of cows. This self-imposed vegetarianism, according to Colonel R. McCarrison, one of the foremost food specialists of the country, robs a large percentage of the population of needed animal fats, proteins, and vitamins. In an interesting recent magazine article on the Problems of Nutrition in India, Colonel McCarrison points out that those races of the north which are either milk users or meat eaters, such as the Pathans, Sikhs and Mahrattas, are larger physically and have greater stamina than many of the people of central and southern India whose food is largely vegetarian. The writer suggests that these physical differences may be due in part to food differences, including the use or non-use of meat, milk, and milk products.<sup>3</sup>

What is said about the non-use of beef as a food by many people can be said with equal force as to milk and its products. The use of milk, ghi (clarified butter), and cheese, may be allowed by

<sup>2</sup>"Indian Cattle" also include water buffaloes. See India in 1930-31, p. 168; also the World Almanac 1932, p. 393.

<sup>3</sup>Col. R. McCarrison, C.I.E., M.D., D.Sc., L.L.D., Pasteur Institute, Coonoor, India, The Problems of Nutrition in India, the Allahabad Farmer, Vol. VIII, No. 2, March, 1934. In this article the writer also suggests that even the cereals in parts of southern India are short in certain vitamin contents that cereals of north India have.



religion and custom, possibly in all the castes; but because of the poor dairy quality of even the best village cows, the supply of milk and its products is negligible. In some localities water buffaloes in large numbers are milked, and so are goats; and both water buffaloes and goats are very well adapted to the climatic and the economic conditions of the country. However, taking the country as a whole, the numbers of these animals are so few and their dairy qualities so poor as not to increase greatly the supply of milk. Thus very few children of the middle and poorer classes get any milk, or enough to amount to anything. We have been told by one of our American agricultural missionaries that even the best village cows of his region would not give more than one to three quarts of milk per day. He says that when he tells his farm clientele of the amount of milk given daily by some of the better cows in America, they think he is lying, and at the same time exhibiting some of the objectionable American bragadocio they sometimes hear about. In the mind of the average Indian farmer, the main function of the cow is to produce male calves to grow up as soon as possible for work bullocks, and incidentally to produce manure for fuel. This point of view is a serious handicap to the production of good dairy cows, and is also a handicap to the health of the childhood of the nation. For a long time to come, with the possible exceptions of certain provinces in North India, the male calves that grow into strong well-developed animals will probably be castrated and put under the yoke, and the scrubby weaklings left to sire the new generations of cows. It is true that Government, Agricultural missions, and other agencies are endeavoring to teach the Indian farmers the principles of better livestock breeding; but taking the country as a whole, they have made only a slight dent upon the inertia of the people in regard to this kind of improvement.

### *The Cow an Object of Veneration*

**The Cow and the Belief in the Transmigration of the Soul.** Having shown that Hindu custom and Hindu religious philosophy emphasize the sacredness of all life, both human and animal, and that this has a distinct bearing upon the presence of so many wild animals in the country, the backward system of livestock farming, food deficiencies and certain forms of religious practice among the masses, we may now inquire a little further into the question of the Hindu veneration of the cow.

The veneration of the cow has many facets of interest. For example, a diseased cow should not be killed just in order that she may be put out of her misery, or a healthy cow should not be

killed for food; for either one may be the reincarnation of a departed relative who would thus have his cycle of reincarnation ruthlessly interrupted. Likewise, to state the principle in an extreme form, the louse on the cow's back, or the tick on her ear, should not be destroyed, for these may be the reincarnation of a departed "great-aunt" who, because of the indiscretions of a previous incarnation, has been condemned to enter the bodies of such lowly animals to pay penance and to undergo a cycle of purification! To kill the cow, the louse, or the tick would thus condemn the unlucky shades of the departed ones to begin this reincarnation cycle all over again and thereby cause the loss of time and of merit thus far earned. In discussing this matter with an American missionary in India, he replied: "The liberal Indian leader is opposed to the traditional Hindu attitude toward the cow. For instance, I have had a young Hindu tell me that 90 per cent of the cows in India should be killed. He likewise ate beef at my dinner table." Yet this particular Hindu might originally have come from a low caste that permitted the eating of beef. Some low castes and out-castes who oppose the killing of cows, even permit the consumption of the flesh of cows that have died of natural causes. This, no doubt, explains in part the attitude of scorn and loathing usually held by the high castes toward the "untouchables".

If American farmers and livestock breeders generally were to entertain the same fatalism and indifference to herd improvement as do the masses of the Hindus, and if they were to hold the same attitudes on beef-eating, it would put an end to our best practices in dairying and livestock breeding,—at least so far as the cow is concerned. It would also eliminate many veterinary doctors, the beef packers, the beef butchers, and a host of other professional and business men. Thus, it seems that it really makes a great deal of difference what people believe, even in respect to the nature and function of the humble cow.

**The Cow in Worship and Festivity.** But the cow is so deeply venerated by orthodox Hindus as to become an object of worship. In Benares is an imposing temple dedicated to the worship of the cow, popularly known as the Cow Temple. And in and about other Hindu temples, so far as non-Hindus are allowed to go, we have seen cows and bulls wending their way throughout the premises, or contentedly chewing the cud while lying by some image or other sacred object. Most of the more important temples have one or more huge images of sacred bulls carved out of granite or moulded in bronze and placed in some conspicuous place. So indulgent are Hindus generally toward cows that cows are permitted to lie or stand on the sidewalks in the more congested parts of cities. We



recall that at one of the more fashionable hotels in Calcutta there were a few cows that continually loitered around the front of the building so that sometimes people had to walk around them in order to enter the front door. At one place we visited in southern India there was a hospital for sick animals. Here diseased, aged, and crippled animals of every description were gathered and fed, and our guide informed us that it was considered a very pious act to donate fodder or other feed to the support of this institution.

Cattle not only live in or near the dwellings of their owners, furnish their owners motive power, fuel and food, and are objects of veneration by the people generally, but also enter into the festive life of the people. An excellent example of the latter is the *Dipavali* festival, or the feast of the lanterns, which is held after the autumn rains are over as a sort of thanksgiving and harvest-home celebration.<sup>4</sup> In preparation for this festival in a village in North India, Mukerji relates how each household selects some of its best cattle for display, and how these animals are then taken to a stream for bathing and later are decorated by having their horns and hoofs painted yellow, their necks garlanded with red oleander, and their backs covered with gayly colored shawls. Early in the morning of the appointed day, these cattle, together with their accompanying owners and other villagers, move in a solemn procession to the village temple, or the "House of Heaven," as it is called, there to receive the benediction of the priest. Then with the temple courtyard filled with people and cattle, the priest, robed in ochre garments, appears on the top of the temple steps, and, slowly lifting his hands to Heaven, solemnly pronounces these words:

"He the Infinite Compassion  
Untainted by colour, unfettered by form,  
He, who satisfies the need of all races and all forms of Life,  
He, to whom all colors are as inviolate as all souls,  
He has satisfied your longings at the beginning, as well as at  
at the ending of all the worlds.  
Peace be unto you,  
Beast and men; may you live in peace,  
May you bring peace to all!"<sup>5</sup>

After receiving this blessing, the procession of men and cattle begin a march toward the communal threshing floor of the village, situated under a great banyan tree on the outskirts of another part of the village. By this time it is afternoon, but the people, far and near, who came to enjoy the festival are on hand to partici-

<sup>4</sup>Mukerji, *Dhan Gopal, Ghond, the Hunter*, p. 18, Dutton, 1928.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

pate. The road over which the procession is to pass has been swept clean and strewn with rice and lotus leaves; and symbolical drawings and decorative designs have been made on the front walls of the villagers' homes facing the road. As the procession passes along, the onlookers, gathered on the side-lines, shower flowers over the heads of the marchers, young girls place garlands around the necks of those in the ranks, while women blow conch-shells and joyfully give voice to their happiness.

At last the procession reaches its destination at the threshing floor where the village elders are gathered. When all are gathered in, the eldest of the elders arises and says: "We are all brothers—man and beast. We are sharers in toil and suffering pain. We partake of one another's well-being; the life that is in the ox is the same life that beats in our blood; the milk that comes from the cow is the strength that is in our children's limbs. May you treat your animals well; may they in turn be moved by God to serve you abundantly."<sup>4</sup> With these words, the gathering is dismissed and the cattle are let loose to wander home unattended.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.



## Chapter XV

### THE WILD ANIMALS OF INDIA

In discussing the wild animals of India, I wish to suggest at the outset that I do not aim at a complete survey of the whole animal kingdom represented there. Rather, I wish to describe only *some* of the wild animals, large and small, that are of special concern to human life in this interesting country (Fig. XVI).

#### *The Termites, or White Ants*

Termites, or the so-called white ants, belong to that division of the animal kingdom called insects. So do the lice, flies, crickets, grasshoppers and mosquitos, which we may say something about later. Though the white ant is a tiny creature, it and its comrades cause India more financial loss, perhaps, than all the tigers, snakes, and other large animals combined. The white ant lives on wood chiefly, and prefers lumber, fallen trees, fence posts, railway ties, and other forms of dead wood. These creatures do not like the light, so they will burrow just under the surface of one wooden object in order to get into another. The preposition "into" is used here advisedly, for they honeycomb whatever they attack. Because of this fact, all the railway ties that I observed in Central and South India were iron; and all the telephone poles and all the posts in the small bit of permanent fencing we noted here were made either of iron or stone. The ground floors, and sometimes the floors of the second stories of dwelling houses pretentious enough to boast of such, were nearly always stone, concrete, or tile, for the same reason. Thus the villagers, who so generally use mud in house construction, have a practical reason other than original cost for the use of such material in house construction; for the white ants do not destroy mud walls. A chair or table left for a few months in the same position on a wooden floor may be attacked by termites and found to be honeycombed throughout, so that a little pressure will bring it down with a crash. Likewise linen left in a wooden chest for a period of time is apt to be spoiled. I heard a building contractor say recently that these ants had

attacked the rafters in the roof of his house, so that he will have to renew that part of his roof soon; and it is said that even the bamboo poles used in the roof of the mud huts of the poorer people are usually destroyed by termites within six or seven years. Likewise in parts of the country still using wooden poles on their telegraph lines, these poles have to be replaced every six or seven years. Thus, wood for buildings or almost any other use, in this country, in the long run, is very costly, if for no other reason than because of the destructive work of the white ants.

There are other troublesome ants in certain sections of India. There is a large black kind that often marches, or swarms over the ground in armies by the million, going over or through every penetrable thing they meet. I have not personally seen any of these armies, but I have heard wild stories of how they have been known to eat, within a short time, the whole carcass of a tiger or wild boar killed by a hunter, leaving only the bare white bones as a memento of the passage of the army. There are also species of small red ants and small black ants that sometimes swarm over houses, making themselves very annoying to the inmates of the houses. For example, in one home in which Mrs. Hypes and I were guests for a few days, a species of small black ants got into our beds. One night we felt something crawling over us, so after brushing the bed covers a little with our hands, imagining our trouble to be only nervousness, we tried again to sleep. However, we soon were driven to turn the flash-light on our beds and found that there were thousands of these ants swarming over them and even between the covers. We found upon inquiry that some people place vessels containing some sort of acrid oil under each bed post, to prevent the ants from worrying people who are trying to sleep. The same protection has to be given cupboards and other places where ants are not wanted.

### *Other Insects*

There are many other injurious insects in this strange country, of direct concern to man. Probably the most important of these is the mosquito. The species known as *Anopheles* carries malaria. Malaria is one of the most destructive diseases among the people of India, killing multiplied thousands every year, and debilitating many more thousands not dying from the attack. Draining the swamps, covering bodies of still water with oil, and placing fish in the ponds to eat the larvae, are methods of combatting the mosquito in other countries; but in a country such as India these prove to be ineffective methods. It is difficult to get the natives to follow instructions toward eliminating the mosquito, partly because of their indifference, partly because of their ignorance, and partly be-



cause of the high cost of kerosene and other oils for use in the program. The average native thinks malaria is caused by a special sort of evil spirit that he or his household has offended. Thus, one will see in many villages special shrines for the worship of the malaria god, the smallpox god, and others.

Bubonic plague is caused by a germ carried by fleas on the bodies of rats. One infected rat passes on germ-laden fleas to the bodies of his mates, and so this terrible disease soon spreads among the rats of a city or a ship. Soon these disease-laden fleas get onto human beings and give them the plague. When the rats of a city begin to die, the people should suspect the presence of the plague. It has been noted that the plague usually breaks out in the parts of cities near grain elevators, or where food of any kind is exposed to the rats. Keeping the city free of rats is a good preventive measure against the bubonic plague, but to thus free a place of rats means killing them. The average Hindu does not want to kill even rats, for to him all life, even that of the flea on the rat, is sacred. It is difficult to get people having such ideas to rid their premises of rodents and vermin. Occasionally one may even see a village woman picking lice off the head of one of her woman friends or of a child; but that may be merely pastime.

There is here also a species of fly that greatly delights in getting into people's eyes. Infants, in particular, if left unprotected, as most of them are, fall a prey to this fly. As a result, there are numerous eye troubles, such as cataracts, which often lead to total blindness. There are also many kinds of crickets and grasshoppers that get on clothes and cut holes in them; and there are bedbugs and numerous other vermin of this sort that go with filthy surroundings, that are found in many places in this country, especially in the homes of the poor people.

### *Birds*

There are many brightly colored wild birds in this country, including parrots and peacocks. The latter in great numbers, dressed in their gaudy plumage, may be seen trailing in a stately manner in the grain fields and the jungles throughout Central and Southern India. The peacock is a very sacred bird to most Hindus, and its plumage is often used as the motif in waxwork and other art. As one drives along the road, frequently he may see, sitting languidly in the trees, gaily colored parrots; but the small green parrot is not so sluggish, and in parts of the country is very devastating to grain crops. The birds of warm climates, as a rule, have more beautiful plumage than those of the temperate and cold zones, particularly the non-carnivorous birds.

A great many of the birds of India, however, are carnivorous. In another chapter we have spoken of the vultures eating dead human bodies placed by the Parsees on the mournful towers of silence. There are also kites, hawks, and other flesh-eating birds here in great numbers, and some of these swarm about noisily while the vultures consume a dead animal or human being. The crows of several different species are also noisy marauders in practically every tree near a house. From the veranda on which I took notes for the present chapter, I saw crows flying into a tree in the yard carrying in their beaks what appeared to be eggs! They made trip after trip with this burden for their young in this tree. Birds of the kind just described, of course, make poultry-raising difficult, since the Indians generally do not keep their poultry housed except at night. Moreover, the crow is a particularly sacred bird to many of the Hindus, and some of the faithful Hindus even feed the crows and stray dogs before putting food before their own families.

### *Reptiles*

India, for ages back, has been noted for its cobras, kraits, pythons, and other snakes. The cobra has many species, and all are very poisonous. A person bitten by a cobra and unattended by adequate medical assistance, rarely lives longer than two hours. The krait, a small snake shorter than one's arm, is even more deadly than the cobra. A person bitten by a krait may die in half an hour. The python is a large non-poisonous snake, and sometimes attains the length of thirty feet. These kill their prey by squeezing it to death. In a hayfield on a farm we visited, there was pointed out the spot where the year before a seventeen-foot python was killed. Having but recently swallowed a wild pig, it was drowsy and was thus easily overtaken and killed. The snakes of this country are fairly plentiful and, especially during the wet season, are apt to come into houses. We were warned by the missionaries never to put our feet out of bed at night without a light. Cobras are frequently killed in people's houses, and we ourselves had the exciting experience one night of having a snake killed in our own bedroom. It is estimated that from twenty to twenty-five thousand people in India die annually of snakebite, and some hundred thousand head of domestic animals die of the same cause.

Chameleons and other lizards are found almost any time in almost any room. You may not see them, but if you will look behind the curtains or pictures on the walls, you are almost sure to be rewarded for your trouble. These are harmless, and are out in search of flies and other insects; but if you are a little nervous, it might be well for you to shake out your shoes before putting them on of a



morning—a lizard or a frog, or even a poisonous scorpion, might be inside. Several times we found small "chemung" frogs in our room, and they, like the lizards, could change their color quickly in order to match their background. One of the larger and more persistent of our frog visitors at a place where we lived for a time was thrown outdoors time and again, only to return. Evidently he practiced non-violent resistance (*Ahimsa*) on our most vigorous efforts to exclude him from our bedroom; and being thrown out frequently did not seem to disturb his mental equilibrium, for he or one of his brothers soon returned to perch stoically upon our walls or curtains.

### *Larger Animals*

There are many of the larger four-footed animals that roam the jungles of India, that give concern to her people. The elephant, at least in story, is counted one of these. I did not see any wild elephants, but I understand that they live in parts of the country. Those of you who saw the movie "Chang" remember how wild elephants trampled down the flimsy houses of the villages. For most of present-day India such dangers are not very imminent. However, wild elephants are yet caught here and broken to serve their masters. Only recently we saw a "holy elephant" broken to temple service and in action at the sacred city of Conjeeveram. This elephant seemed to know well how to perform his duties among the numerous ascetic priests in the temple in the services of the gods. Of course we were not allowed to enter the inner temple where the most noisy and heated worship was going on.

The jackal, an animal about the size of an average collie dog, and belonging to the canine family, is very plentiful here. After dark, packs of jackals fringe the outskirts of almost every city and village. Nearly every night after landing in India I heard the whining yaps of these animals. The hyenas, a species of ferocious carnivorous animal, are not as numerous or as swift-running as the jackals, but are larger and fiercer. They are said often to go along hunting with packs of jackals, and after jackals make the kill, drive them off until they have first feasted on the prey. While people do not seem to fear the jackals very much, they do fear the hyenas. It is said that if there are a number of hungry hyenas in a pack, they might attack even a man. Both hyenas and jackals are devastating to poultry, sheep, goats, and sometimes cattle. Poultry is housed at night, and as stated before, all herds and flocks are attended all the time during the day and are put into folds during the night.

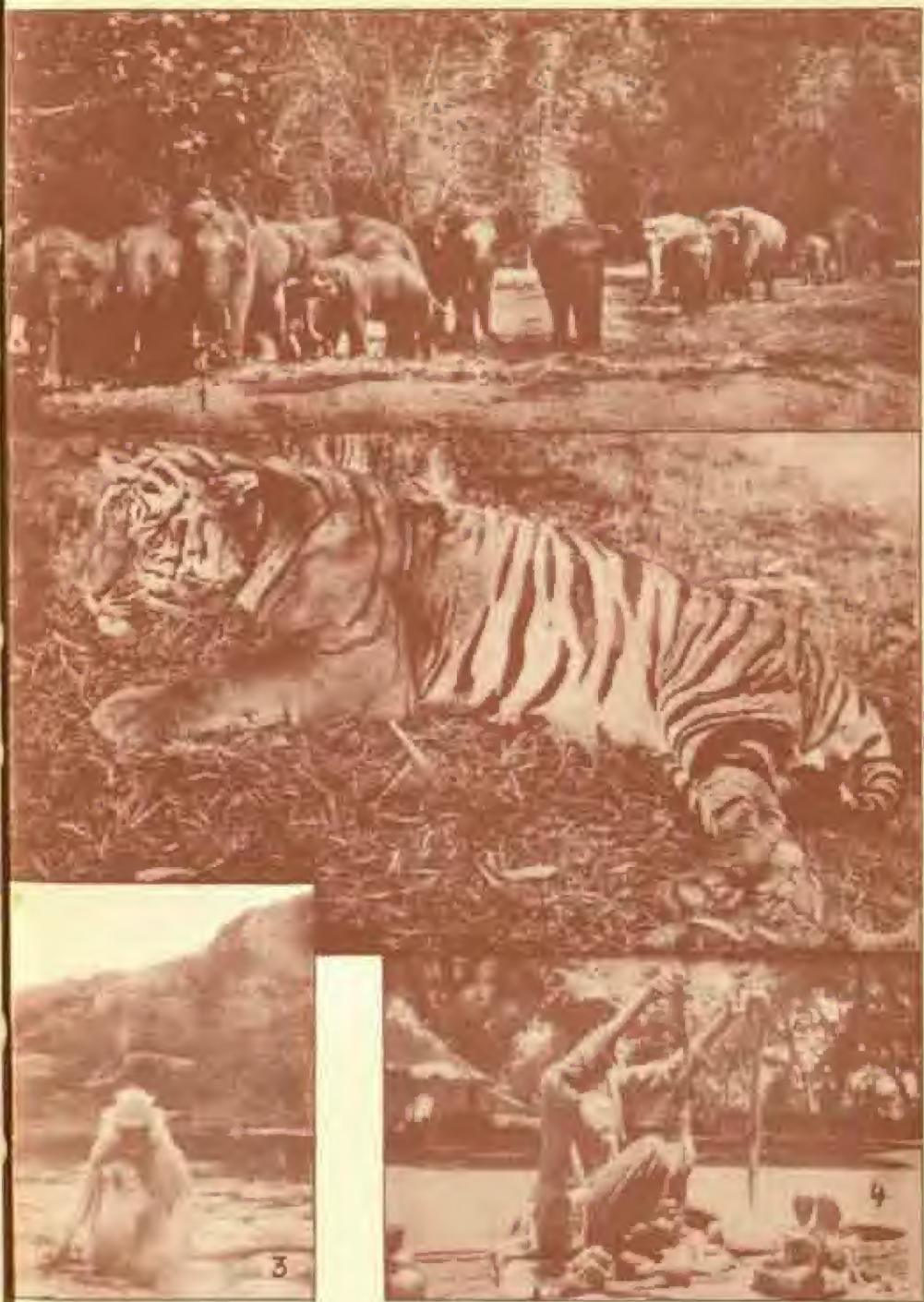


FIG. XVI. WILD ANIMALS OF INDIA. 1. A herd of wild elephants in a bamboo jungle; 2. A fallen monarch of the jungle; 3. A sacred monkey, at Kanutek; 4. Cobras and their master,—a snake charmer.





The tiger, while not uncommon in Burma and some of the other sections, is not so plentiful as some story writers would have us believe. However, a party including one of our group of researchers killed a tiger on a hunting trip during Christmas week. But there are numerous cheetas, a species of leopard, in some sections. A few nights before making our temporary home with the principal of a mission farm school, a cheeta was killed in the poultry coop on the school premises. A few nights later a large cheeta ran in front of our automobile, and we could have shot it if we had had a gun; for when we turned our spotlight on it, it stood still for a while and gazed at us. The ladies of our group urged the driver to hurry on in order to put distance between us and this animal.

There are three other wild animals not mentioned thus far that are of major concern to dwellers in India. These are stray dogs, wild boars, and monkeys. The stray dogs infest almost every village, and most of them never have any real owner. These dogs are not so prominent or troublesome during the day; but when night comes, they fare forth to look for food. Their fighting and their barking is more worrisome to one trying to sleep than the noise of the jackals. Sometimes rabies breaks out among these dogs, and then they become a real menace to the villagers and their livestock. The wild boars and the monkey destroy the peanut and other crops. Wild boars, when suddenly disturbed, will sometimes attack a man, and they are one of the most feared of the wild animals in India. The monkeys swarm along the road, even over the roofs of dwellings, and eat whatever they can lay hold of that is edible. Recently, when going out on one of my tours, I passed through a small village where some food was offered for sale by the roadside. Some monkeys were perched in the trees about, and a few of the bolder ones were squatting patiently on the ground a few feet from the vendor's stand. If he should turn his back, his food would soon go up into the trees, then down a number of hungry monkey throats! Another harmful animal is the mongoose. This animal is larger than a full-grown gray squirrel, is built somewhat like a weasel, is grayish in color, and nests under stones or in the ground. This animal kills snakes, even large cobras, and in this respect is beneficial. We saw a fight between a snake and a mongoose, but these animals were carried around by an old fellow for the purpose of making money. The mongoose kept boring in on the snake until it got its chance to seize it behind the head. All the twisting and wrapping the snake did could not shake the mongoose off until his master took him off. The mongoose kills poultry, and can get through almost any kind of fence or screen. A family



of these animals lived in a bank near the house where I prepared the first draft of this story.

Though India is an old country, and thickly populated, it is well supplied with wild animals. The Hindu religion, which forbids the killing of animals, is largely responsible for this condition. The idea is that these animals are the reincarnation of the souls of departed humans, and to kill an animal would disturb God's provision for the departed human soul who is thus working out penance or a new cycle of purification. Thus we note again the significance of *what* one believes. Agriculture cannot go forward here very far until many of these wild animals are either reduced in number or destroyed entirely; and the health and physical safety of the people cannot be assured without the destruction or control of many kinds of animals and vermin.

*Part Four*

RELIGIONS AND ARTS





## Chapter XVI

### HINDUISM AND ITS OFFSHOOTS

In previous chapters we have given the reader some ideas as to how intensely religious the people of India are and how their religions are tied into their daily lives. We wish to go further in this chapter to present a more complete account of the major indigenous religions of this country.

The number of adherents to the major religions of India and Burma, both indigenous and imported, as estimated in the religious Census for 1931, were as follows:

Hindus	239,195,140
Moslems	77,677,545
Buddhists	12,786,806*
Tribal	8,280,347
Christians	6,296,763
Sikhs	4,335,771
Jains	1,252,105
Zoroastrians	109,752
Jews	24,141
Minor religions	571,187
Not enumerated by religion	2,308,221

\* All but about 400,000 of these Buddhists are in Burma.

It is to be noted that Hinduism has the largest group of followers, so it is upon this group that we wish to turn our attention for the present. "Hinduism," says Hume, "is the oldest organized religion in the world. It is the complex gradual growth of very religiously minded people . . . It has been diversified, yet unified, by its theoretical belief in one immanent, all-inclusive, all-sanctifying World Soul, and by its practical social control through caste."<sup>1</sup> Often Hinduism and Brahmanism are used as equivalent or interchangeable terms, though the latter is less inclusive, indicating a socio-religious structure and a system of belief and authoritarian rule headed by the Brahmins or priestly caste.

<sup>1</sup>Hume, Robert E. *The World's Living Religions*, p. 19., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923.



### *Types of Hinduism*

Hinduism, as a religion, has had a complex historical origin. This works toward giving it varied aspects, when viewed from different angles; yet, according to Radhakrishnan, one of India's foremost contemporary philosophers, throughout its long career the oneness of the ultimate spirit has been the governing ideal of the Hindu religion.<sup>2</sup> But in viewing it in the light of the past, Dr. Hume sees in it at least six developmental aspects which he terms types of Hinduism. These we shall present pretty largely in Dr. Hume's own phraseology, without attempting to defend either his classification or his definitions thereof.

**Nature Worship.** Hinduism as a religion has developed internally several different types, to say nothing of some notable offshoots that later became separate world religions. Early Hinduism was probably largely nature worship, its sacred literature being the Vedas (Books of Knowledge) and the Rig-Veda or prayer and hymn book. The earth, sun, moon, sky, wind, rain, and fire were worshipped, and worship consisted of prayers for long life, sons, cattle, good crops, freedom from disease, success over enemies, and general world prosperity.<sup>3</sup>

**Priestly Hinduism.** Then followed a Priestly Hinduism which transformed the relatively simple Vedic religion into a system of strict domination and elaborate ceremonies, including material offerings and animal sacrifices. Restrictions were laid on eating beef and on a wife's eating with her husband. Reincarnation was also clearly set forth.

**Philosophical Hinduism.** This was followed by a Philosophical Hinduism which was characterized by speculation and metaphysics. Its sacred literature, the Upanishads, set forth Brahma as the absolute, infinite, omnipresent, impersonal, indescribable, neuter Being.<sup>4</sup> To a degree it replaced the Vedic polytheism, and ethically it made no distinctions between right and wrong because it puts its devotee into a serene supernatural oneness with Brahma.<sup>5</sup> Salvation was to be obtained chiefly through speculation upon a pantheistic Supreme Being. This, if a correct interpretation, would seem to overlook the principle of *Karma* altogether.

**Legalistic Hinduism.** Then followed a Legalistic Hinduism with the Law-Book of Manu as its principal code of action and belief. It is said that many of its moral precepts are very similar to those advocated by Christianity, such as, for example, those touch-

<sup>2</sup>Radhakrishnan, S., *The Heart of Hindutva*, Ch. I, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

ing upon obedience to parents, repentance, and confession. The caste system was elaborated, a regimen of life was laid out for the devotees, and salvation was to be sought mainly through obedience to caste law.<sup>6</sup>

**Devotional Hinduism.** About the time of the beginning of the Christian Era, Devotional Hinduism was developed. Its sacred literature, e. g., the Bhagavad Gita, developed a number of dramatic poems that rank among the great literature of all ages. This phase in the development of Hinduism emphasizes worship, offers universal salvation even to women and low castes, and reaffirms the main features of the historic caste system. According to Hume, the practical message of the Bhagavad Gita may be stated thus: "Do your caste duty, and trust your God for the rest of your salvation."<sup>7</sup> The entire adequacy of this statement, perhaps, might be questioned by certain scholars.

**Popular Hinduism.** Popular Hinduism is a later development in this socio-religious institution. Its sacred literature contained the Mahabharata (Great Bharata War), and the Ramayana (or career of the God Ram). It also included eighteen Puranas or collections of religious stories.<sup>8</sup> It is said to be a mixture of all the other forms of Hinduism, reaffirms caste rules for the governing of the intimate details of life, encourages idolatry, the development of numerous religious festivals and sacred places, and includes a strong core of animism.

In this brief review of the different phases of Hinduism in its historical and current perspectives, it is clear that it includes social institutions, social class, and country, as well as religious belief, in which these elements are united inextricably and fairly consistently. Radhakrishnan has expressed this point of view very well in the following generalization as to the nature of modern Hinduism, which we quote: "Hinduism accepts all religious notions as facts and arranges them in the order of their more or less intrinsic significance. The bewildering polytheism of the masses and the uncompromising monotheism of the classes are for the Hindu the expressions of one and the same force at different levels. Hinduism insists on our working steadily upwards and improving our knowledge of God. The worshippers of the absolute are the highest in rank; second to them are the worshippers of the personal God; then come the worshippers of the incarnations like Rama, Krishna, Buddha; below them are those who worship ancestors, deities and sages; and lowest of all are the worshippers of the petty

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 30. See also Hill, W. D. F., *The Bhagavadgita*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 30.



forces and spirits."<sup>9</sup> Thus he concludes that Hinduism is not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, and slightly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. He might have added that the rise of numerous reformers in India's historical past has contributed to this complexity.

Bringing the high points of Hinduism into a systematic brief statement, Dr. Wiser lists the following as essential beliefs:<sup>10</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. In Caste   | a. Good works                                   |
| 2. In Polytheism  | b. Faithfulness to caste                        |
| 3. In Evil Spirits  | c. Separation from passion, desire and appetite |
| 4. In Nature Worship  | d. Faithfulness in family                       |
| 5. In Transmigration  | e. Devotion                                     |
| 6. In Influence of planets and stars                        | f. Ceremonial rites                             |
| 7. In Propitiation of ancestors                             | g. Aid of holy men officiating at certain rites |
| 8. In Veneration of life                                    | h. Aid of sacred words                          |
| 9. In ability to condition present and future life through: |   |

It is clear that Hinduism contains speculative and philosophical teachings that have a world-wide appeal; but in its practical results it seems to have vital weaknesses. As to the latter, it does not recognize moral responsibility to a Supreme Being; it does not recognize adequately the worth and the dignity of the human individual or of womankind; it promotes idolatry; it upholds questionable aspects of the caste system; and except in the case of a few reformers, does not have a world point of view.

### *A Comparison of Hinduism and Christianity*

In order to set forth briefly a few of the high points of the teachings of Hinduism as one of the world's great living religions, we shall make a comparison of Hinduism and Christianity. In so doing, however, we experience the difficulty of trying to harmonize the various sectarian and often mutually opposing theologies found within both Christianity and Hinduism; and then we are also faced by a certain amount of misconception and emotionalized prejudice mutually existing between certain extremists in these two great religions. There are Arya Samajists who would expel organized Christianity from the land, and there are Christians who look upon Hinduism as wholly inadequate. Therefore, in order to give the reader an authoritative statement of the subject, even though all sectarian groups within Christianity and Hinduism may not wholly agree as to the major teachings of their respective faiths, or as to

<sup>9</sup>Radhakrishnan, S., *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 21, 22, Macmillan Co., 1928.

<sup>10</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *Social Institutions of a Hindu Village*, p. 261.



FIG. XVII. INDIAN TEMPLES (A). 1. *The Golden Temple, Benares*; 2. *The Money Lenders' Temple, Ramick*; 3. *The ruins of the Dhamekh Stupa, Saranath*. See also Figs. XXI and XXIII.





what is presented here, we quote again freely from Hume, a prominent contemporary authority on comparative religion. The points of comparison presented by Hume are as follows:<sup>11</sup>

**Conception of God.** Hinduism believes in a Supreme Being that it terms *Brahma*. *Brahma* is a serenely blissful neuter Being, unhampered and unstirred by ethical and metaphysical considerations in affairs among human beings. In Christianity the Supreme Being is perfect and works according to purpose. This Being's personality is ascribed the masculine gender, is lovingly serviceful, ethical, and cooperative in the redemption of his creatures.

**Conception of Man.** In Hinduism, the human individual is a temporary manifestation of the supreme impersonal *Brahma*. The human is not inherently of value, is not responsible to *Brahma*, and does not possess a brotherly relationship with fellow human beings. In Christianity the individual is considered "a child of the Heavenly Father," hence has a brotherhood relationship with other human beings, which, in turn, calls for an ethical rule of order in human society. Christianity considers man as capable of sin and degeneration, yet, through conversion and loving service, as also capable of fellowship with God here and hereafter.

**Conception of the World.** In Hinduism the world is a temporary place to serve largely as a realm for the reincarnations of the departed. On the whole, the world is considered a worthless illusion, hence Hinduism makes but little place for the laying up of worldly treasure, and is but little concerned for the conditions of mankind. Thus from a limited point of view, there appears to be in Hinduism an inconsistency, on the one hand, between the theory of the Divine origin of the world and its contents, including mankind, and on the other hand, the current Hindu conception of the low value of the individual and the world. However, this seeming paradox may be more apparent than real, since astute philosophers can explain it away in a most ingenious manner. Similar apparent inconsistencies, no doubt, may be found in Christian theology. In Christianity, the world is a manifestation of a Divine plan, wisdom, and power. It is to be progressively understood and enjoyed as a means for developing a moral and spiritual order; hence there is a Divine sanction, by implication or in actuality, for a socio-economic organization of human affairs that will assist people in the enjoyment of the world.

**Conception of Sin.** In Hinduism, there is no real sin, for, to the Hindu, ethical rules are meaningless because the world is divine.<sup>12</sup> Evil is merely a term of reference to indicate the distance

<sup>11</sup>Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 to 40.

<sup>12</sup>Radhakrishnan, *S.*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.



which good has to traverse. Ignorance and violation of caste rule are defects which call for reincarnation; but these apparent evils are overcome by compliance to hereditary social conventions and by communion with the Brahma, in whom the individual is ultimately absorbed. In orthodox Christianity sin is real and is against an all-observing, just, yet merciful God. Sin also may be against one's self as well as against one's fellow-man; hence social relationships have ethical implications. Conversion, forgiveness, worship, ethical behavior, and growth in spiritual knowledge are the means by which sin may be averted and condoned.

**Conception of Salvation.** In Hinduism, a person may be saved by any one of three ways: the intellectual way of knowledge (*jnana-marga*); the emotional way of devotion (*bhakti-marga*) to any deity; and the practical way of works (*karma-marga*) in prescribed ceremonial law. All three of these ways of salvation include the idea of rebirth. According to orthodox Christianity, salvation is obtained through forgiveness and devotion to the laws of God. In this, Jesus, the Divine avatar, became carnate for a time in order to make clear God's law through teaching deeds of devotion and sacrifice, and now, as one of the Trinity, is an object of veneration and worship.<sup>12</sup>

**Conception of Human Society.** In Hinduism, people who have been born into the caste system are a part of a divinely arranged social structure which is to be accepted without question. In Christianity, a righteous God administers just rewards and punishments; caste or social status, and all are mutually responsible and mutually related in a functional social order. Yet in actual practice, a critic can easily point out obvious class distinctions among Christians, often even in the same congregation.

**Conception of Responsibility for Deeds.** In Hinduism there is considered to exist outside of Brahma, or any deity, a cosmic power of justice named *Karma*. This is an impersonal law of *deeds*, which administers justice to every person according to his deserts by the incarnation assigned him in the life to follow. However, by refraining from all activities and desires a Hindu may succeed in averting the full consequences of his previous deeds and thus secure a superior state of impersonal blessedness. According to orthodox Christianity, a righteous God administers just rewards and punishments; but the individual through repentance and forgiveness may escape punishment, and after this life be received into Heaven.

To summarize somewhat, without undue repetition, the similarities and dissimilarities between these two great world religions, we quote from Zimand as follows: "Unlike Christianity and Mo-

<sup>12</sup>Hume, *op. cit.* See specific pages dealing with this and similar topics.

hammedanism, it [Hinduism] has never claimed one single founder. Its teachings are not confined to one doctrine of salvation or to one conception of blessedness . . . . In certain forms it is atheistic or theistic, but the pantheistic conception predominates . . . . Vague and comprehensive, it has remained remarkably elastic, assimilating each new successful religious movement that has sprung up on Indian soil. Tolerating other modes of worship, it contains the lowest forms of idolatry mingled with a faith in the Godhead. Though it has never been to any great extent a proselytising religion, it has yet withstood successfully all hostile attacks."<sup>14</sup>

### *Offshoots of Hinduism*

While Hinduism has long been regarded by its devotees as quite satisfying for both this and the future life, a number of reform movements, from time to time, have arisen within it. The major results of some of these seem to have been the formation of new religions or sects rather than in the reformation of the old. We shall describe very briefly five of these reform movements in Hinduism, the first three of which ultimately became new religions: Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, the Brahma Samaj, and the Arya Samaj.

**Jainism.** Mahavira (597-527 B. C.), the founder, according to one authority, and according to another the last leader of the Jain reform movement, was a contemporary of Buddha in India; Zoroaster in Persia; Lao-tze in China; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, the Israelite prophets of the Babylonian Exile; and Pythagoras and a number of his fellow Greek scholars.<sup>15</sup> This was truly a period of great religious awakening; but, despite its auspicious beginning, Jainism never attained the following of many other religions, never became important outside of India, and became split into many warring sects. It comprises today only a little over a million followers found mostly in southern and western India.

Jainism has been called the religion of asceticism. Yet many of its devotees, while theoretically subscribing to a life of self-denial, have amassed great fortunes; and as a religious sect, the Jains have built many shrines and temples famed for their architectural beauty and costliness.

Though reared in luxury and having married a daughter of royalty, Mahavira became a religious ascetic, who, naked, wandered about subjecting himself to bodily sufferings. Later he became a teacher of monks. He rejected the Hindu polytheistic beliefs and

<sup>14</sup>Zinnand, Savel, *Living India*, pp. 70, 71, Longmans, Green & Co., 1923. Certain Hindu philosophers explain the apparent idolatry of some branches of Hinduism as an effort to focus thought upon celestial beings through the aid of concrete objects (idols).

<sup>15</sup>See Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 42, and *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, p. 242.



the hereditary caste system, but taught Karma (Law of Deeds), transmigration, and the abandonment of both love and hate.

**Buddhism.** Gautama, though perhaps not the first Buddha, is regarded as the founder of Buddhism (Wisdom). He was born about 560 B. C. at Kapilavastu (or the Lumbini Gardens, near-by, according to some accounts), a town about a hundred miles north of the city of Benares. It is said that he was the son of a rich rajah, was brought up in luxury, but at the age of twenty-nine renounced his princely position to become a religious ascetic, as did Mahavira. Thus, as the result of meditation he set forth the Four Noble Truths, namely: (1) all existence involves suffering, (2) all suffering is the result of indulging in inherently insatiable desires, (3) therefore all suffering will cease upon the suppression of desires, and (4) every person should live moderately. He also taught the necessity of right belief, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavor, right thought, and right concentration,<sup>10</sup> and that through the exercise of these virtues one would attain Nirvana, or the Highest Happiness.

As opposed to the current Hindu belief in gods, worship, dogma, and supernatural relations, Gautama preached salvation by meditation, self-discipline, and ethical culture. He accepted the law of Karma, the doctrine of transmigration, but rejected the caste system, the efficacy of the Brahmanical sacerdotal system, and the authority of the Vedas. While, perhaps, he did not purposely set out to establish a new religion, he actually did so, bringing forth the first religion to become international in its scope. Today, however, Buddhism is almost extinct in India, except in certain localities, such as the Himalaya Mountain area, Burma, and Ceylon. Like most great religious leaders who sprang up in the Orient, Gautama was reputed to have had a supernatural birth, was regarded by some sects as a divine savior, and is generally deified and idolized among his followers today.

**Sikhism.** Nanak, a contemporary of Martin Luther, was the founder of Sikhism. He was born in 1469 A. D. near Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. Sikhism never attained the importance of the parent religion, and today, is largely confined to the Punjab, the place of its origin. However, owing to good physique and other qualities making for military prowess, Sikhs, in comparatively small numbers, are widely scattered, forming the bodyguards of many of the provincial governors throughout India, and serve as policemen in Malasia and China.

Sikhism was a conscious attempt to harmonize Mohammedanism and Hinduism, the two rival religions of North India. This, to

<sup>10</sup>Home, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

a degree, was attained among its followers; but the teachings and the personality of the founder became important elements in the faith. Its founder, particularly after his death, was surrounded by folk-story with the atmosphere of reverence. Many miracles were ascribed to him, and his death was said to have been a miraculous vanishing from the earth.

Nanak was a great evangelist, very much like Saint Paul, and travelled widely, denouncing Hindu asceticism, ostentatious prayer and sacrifices, and proclaiming the one sovereign true God, for whom through meditation, all men, regardless of caste, had a right to search. Sikhism repudiated the Hindu Vedas, the Hindu degradation of women, Hindu infanticide, Hindu vegetarianism, and the caste system. In summarizing his teachings, one modern writer states that: "It may be safely said that he was not a Christian, yet the noblest of all Christians."<sup>17</sup>

**The Brahma Samaj.** Traditional Hinduism has undergone other attempts at purification from within its own ranks. One of these reform movements was the Brahma Samaj, inaugurated about 1828 A. D. by Ram Mohan Rai (Roy) in Calcutta. The movement had its origin from a reform organization started by the same originator as early as 1800.

This Samaj (organization) though having experienced division over certain points and having become more or less moribund, in recent years has experienced a renewed activity. But it is said that many of the reform tenets of this organization have become accepted rather widely by leaders of modern Hinduism, thus lessening the influence of the Samaj as a separate group. It has been said that the proselyting activities of Mohammedanism and Christianity have called the attention of many Hindus to certain apparent weaknesses of their religion, which has resulted in rekindled interest in reform.

One of the most influential and important sects of this organization, the followers of Babu Debendra Nath Tagore, denies the infallibility of the Vedas. It acknowledges one Supreme God endowed with personality, moral attributes, and intelligence, without incarnation. Immortality and progress of the soul are taught; pilgrimages, ceremonial, and penance are regarded as vain; and caste distinctions are declared worthless. Moreover, moral righteousness and indulgent regard for the opinions of others are stressed. The writer recalls while visiting a center of this organization at Santiniketan, where Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's shram and the focus of a number of his cultural activities are located, that before

<sup>17</sup>Hume, *op. cit.*, quoting from Sewaram Singh Thapar, B. A., L.L.B., *A Critical Study of the Life and Teachings of Sri Gurm Nanak Dev, the Founder of Sikhism.*



registering as an occupant of the guest house he had to read and subscribe to the requirements of all guests, namely, that while there he would do nothing whatsoever which would cause pain to any person belonging to any religion or sect.

The Visva-Bharati, Dr. Tagore's organization and school at Santiniketan (the Abode of Peace), while aiming perhaps to purge Hinduism of its excrescences, also more specifically assumes a world mission, as stated in the following objects of the society:

1. "To study the mind of man in its realization of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view."
2. "To bring into more intimate relation with one another, through patient study and research, the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity."
3. "To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of their life and thought in Asia."
4. "To seek to realize in a common fellowship of study the meeting of the East and the West, and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through the establishment of free communication of ideas between the two hemispheres."
5. "To provide at Santiniketan a center of culture where research into the study of the religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Sikh, Christian, and other civilization may be pursued along with the culture of the West, with simplicity in externals which is necessary for true spiritual realization, in amity, good-fellowship and cooperation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste, and in the name of the One Supreme Being who is Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam."<sup>18</sup>

**The Arya Samaj.** The Arya Samaj, founded about 1866 by Dayanand Saraswati, was another important reform movement in Hinduism. However, at least in its beginning, it assailed the Christian scriptures and sought in the Vedas the solution to all problems of human misery and final salvation. It attracted educated men whose Hinduism had been undermined but who were opposed to the teachings of foreign creeds, while they wished to reconcile modern science and western ethics with the faith of the Vedas. Moreover, it has adopted many of the missionary methods of the Christian Church, including conversion to Hinduism of peoples of other faith, a practice hitherto unknown to orthodox Hinduism. The

<sup>18</sup>Visva-Bharati, Bulletin No. 5, December, 1925.

Arya Samaj is not as inclusive as the Brahma Samaj, is narrower in scope and intenser in convictions.<sup>19</sup>

### *Conclusion*

**Other Religions.** As stated at the beginning of this chapter, there are other religions in India besides Hinduism and its offshoots. Animism is one of these indigenous religions, and seems to have been the religion of the early Dravidians of central and southern India; and, even today, is the religion of many people, such as the Santals of Bengal. In its narrower definition, as a religion, its devotees attribute conscious life to natural phenomena such as rivers and mountains. Many of these objects of nature are held sacred as if they were animated by gods, demons, fairies, ghosts and devitas (spirits), many of which are considered malevolent. Worship often partakes of the nature of exorcism and magic. But, in a real sense, animism is not a separate religion, since elements of its teachings can be detected in the other indigenous religions, and even in Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, the three important imported religions.

Zoroastrianism in India is almost wholly the religion of the Parsees. By far the largest majority of these people live in the city of Bombay. Many of the Parsees are wealthy bankers, merchants, and manufacturers. They are regarded also as among the most progressive social elements of the Indian population. The Parsees fled to India from Persia when that country was overrun by the conquering Mohammedans. Religious zeal having brought them as fugitives to this country, it also activates a rather strict adherence to the teachings of Zoroaster, the founder of this faith. In their modes of worship, wherein the four elements are venerated, in their exposure of their dead to the vultures, and in their non-intermarriage with other tribes and castes, the social and the cultural integrity of the Parsees has been maintained throughout the years.

The foregoing very brief account of Hinduism and its offshoots is merely an introduction that the interested reader should follow up in more authoritative and extended works. However, almost every chapter of this book throws light upon the practical implications of Hinduism in the lives of its devotees, for the people of India are very religious, and the native religions of the country are closely integrated in the lives of the people, permeating every department thereof. Withal, Hinduism historically has proved very elastic. "It has survived a Buddha within its fold, an Aurangzeb

<sup>19</sup>Encyclopædia Britannica, 11th Edition, Vol. 2, p. 495. For a more extended review of the various reform movements in Indian social, civic, and religious affairs, read Parquhar, J. N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, especially Chapters 2 and 3, The Macmillan Co., 1924.



without. Its survival was due to its amazing capacity for adaptation to circumstances, power of absorbing what was life-giving, of modifying what was non-essential and of rejecting everything that would have weakened the foundations of its social system."<sup>20</sup> Thus in India, in the words of Radhakrishnan, one cannot say there is a wide difference between the Brahmin, the Sufi, or the Christian mystics at their best. Introspective contemplation, self-abasement, and spiritual values are their common objectives.

Mohammedanism and Christianity, the other two important imported religions, are treated separately in chapters to follow.

<sup>20</sup>Mayhew, Arthur, C. I. E., *The Education of India*. pp. 29-40.

## Chapter XVII

### ISLAM IN INDIA

Islam, or as it is more popularly called, Mohammedanism, one of the important imported religions of India, has been referred to in previous chapters. We wish now to present to the reader some idea of its teachings and of its place in the life of modern India. However, in attempting to do this, as in the previous chapter on Hinduism and its offshoots, a mass of detailed knowledge of a specialized nature in the field of interpretative history, social psychology, and comparative religion is called for, so that it is difficult indeed in one brief chapter to give a clear and accurate account of it. Hence we shall merely attempt to *introduce* the reader to some phases of the subject.

#### *Historical Backgrounds*

**Mohammedan Culture Patterns Basically Religious.** Before beginning our main task, however, it will be advisable for us to portray a brief background which will explain broadly how and why this religion has such a firm hold upon its adherents. To that end we wish to show first that the manners and customs of the Indian Mohammedans are basically rooted in their religion. Though Mohammedanism is an imported religion from countries to the north and west, it has become firmly incorporated in the life of its devotees in India. Often, as in the lands of its origin, it finds expression in fanatical zeal, at least among special classes of its adherents and upon special occasions. However, intense zeal and strict adherence to ancient beliefs and practices are characteristic of practically all the religions of India, as the reader may surmise from the accompanying chapters on the religions of that country (Fig. XXII).

Notwithstanding the traditional strictness as to doctrine and ritualistic forms, Mohammedanism in India ultimately became tinged with the mysticism and the animism of the indigenous Hindu religions. Thus it grew to have much in common with the native religions, yet not enough in common to prevent much internecine trouble between these two major religious communities. There seems, from the first, to have existed between them uncompromising differences in creed or practice, and a zeal that frequently found expression in the spilling of human blood. A traditional



aspect of this religious zeal has been the adoption of aggressive proselyting, even by means of violence; and this, no doubt, is responsible for some of the communal conflicts which occasionally occur in India today.

Probably the most noted occurrence of communal conflict in recent years was the Moplah uprising in 1921. The Moplahs, according to tradition, are descendants of old Arab traders and the native women on the Malabar Coast. Through the efforts of unprincipled swaraj (self-government) agitators, it is reported, these simple-minded folk were made to believe that Government was lifting up its hand against the holy places of Islam, though it is averred that the basic cause of the uprising was a protest of the poverty-stricken Moplahs against the oppressive petty Hindu landlords. For a time they thus unwittingly became zealots for swaraj; but swaraj to a Mohammedan Moplah could only mean the coming of the earthly Kingdom of Islam, in which no idol-worshipping Hindu could be tolerated alive. Thus this uprising quickly resolved itself into a communal struggle with the local Hindus, in which some three thousand Moplahs cast away their lives and a great number of Hindus were slain or forcibly "converted" to Islam before Government troops could master the situation.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, communal conflicts on such large proportions are rare.

As previously stated, these basic differences in the religious culture patterns of the Hindus and the Moslems, if fanned by the winds of fanaticism, are ready to burst into petty strife at a moment's notice, especially in certain crowded urban areas and among certain particular groups. The Hindus hold the cow to be sacred, and love music; the Mohammedans are beef-eaters, and demand silence during their devotion. In communities occupied by both Hindus and Mohammedans there is always the danger that a "Hindu marriage procession may meet a Mohammedan mourning cortege; or the Mohammedans may drive their cattle to slaughter through the Hindu quarter; or a fundamentalist Moslem may throw beef during the night into a Hindu temple or break an idol; or a Hindu may shout an insult; or a Mohammedan may derive particular satisfaction from cutting a branch from the bo or pipul trees, which the Hindus hold sacred. Any of these childish acts are sufficient to let loose the furies;"<sup>2</sup> and similar communal riots like the Moplah uprising, connected with the picketing of foreign goods shops, or aroused by insults to opposing religious groups, are remotely probable in India today.

<sup>1</sup>Zimand, Savel, *Living India*, p. 128. See also Hindu-Moslem Unity, an article in *India*, Part B, Vol. CXLV, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1929, by V. A. G. R. Lytton, P. C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., formerly Governor of Bengal.

<sup>2</sup>Zimand, *Ibid.*, p. 135.

**The Numerical Strength of Mohammedanism in India.** As noted in the previous chapter, Mohammedanism numerically has a large place in Indian life. However, in countries like India and China, where a number of religions are inextricably intermingled, not only in the country, but even in the same individual, the numbers of adherents to the various faiths are hard to ascertain.<sup>3</sup> But in 1931 it was estimated that there was in India roughly one Mohammedan to every three Hindus; and of the 230 millions of Mohammedans throughout the world in 1921, roughly 30 per cent were found in India.<sup>4</sup>

**Variants in Indian Mohammedanism.** Mohammedans differ considerably as to their numerical distribution among the provinces of India, and as to their cultural characteristics. In the North West Frontier Province more than 90 per cent of the population is Mohammedan; in the Punjab and in Bengal about 55 per cent and 53 per cent, respectively; while in the southern portions of the country the percentage of Mohammedans is much smaller. On the whole, Mohammedans are said to live in the cities and towns in relatively larger numbers than do the Hindus; hence they represent more nearly an urban culture than do the latter who are, in the main, agriculturists and village dwellers. In some sections, however, such as in parts of Bengal, the Moslems are said to represent the poorest of the farm population.

In the north the Mohammedans have a substantial strain of the old conquering Persians and Afghan stocks, while in the south they consist mostly of converts from the depressed Hindu classes. Thus, it is said that the Mohammedans of the north exhibit a spirit of aggressiveness and independence that is not generally characteristic of Mohammedans in the south; and in the south, especially, Mohammedans have acquired marked traces of other characteristics peculiar to the indigenous Hindu religion. Yet we do not mean to say that mysticism has not been a basic characteristic of Islam, too.

While Islam by its possession of a common Koran, common traditions, and the decisions of jurists, presents the outward characteristics of a well-organized system of religion, there are throughout Indian Mohammedanism marked differences in dogma, ritual, and social practice. These differences have arisen partly because of the isolation of many groups from the older centers of Mohammedanism, and partly because many of the more recent adherents to Mohammedanism have retained remnants of their former faiths and practices. More especially are these differences possible in In-

<sup>3</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 12, p. 157. See former chapter on Hinduism and its Offshoots.

<sup>4</sup>Hume, Robert Ernest, *The World's Living Religions*, p. viii.



dian Mohammedanism because it possesses no generally recognized central ecclesiastical authority, holds no national councils or convocations, and has no great religious center like Cairo or the sacred cities of Arabia for Western Islam, or Benares and Conjeeveram for the Hindus, or Rome and Canterbury for the Christians.<sup>5</sup> There has grown up in Islam, therefore, contrary to the warnings of the Koran, a number of political and sectarian divisions, which accounts for many variations in its culture patterns. These divisions should be described here very briefly.

Mohammed died without leaving a son or any appointed successor. For twenty-eight years the leadership was assumed, in turn, by four personal comrades: Abu Bekr, who ordered the collection of Mohammed's sayings and extended the boundaries of the new faith; Omar, who conquered Syria and Persia; Othman, who ordered a revision of the Koran; and Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, with whose assassination Islam became permanently divided into sects. There arose then a series of caliphates, some of them warring against each other and maintaining a number of more or less competitive political and religious centers. Some of these centers continue, perhaps with waning prestige, even to the present day.<sup>6</sup> At Damascus was established the Omayyad Caliphate (660-750 A. D.) that started the system of hereditary succession. From this center Islam was extended by force into Africa and Spain, and was finally stopped from its aggressions in Europe by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours, 732 A. D. The Abbaside Caliphate (759-1258) traced its origin to Abul Abbas, an uncle of Mohammed, and included among its caliphs the renowned Harun-al-Raschid, whose capital was Bagdad. A Spanish Caliphate held sway at Cordova (755-1236), and a Moorish Caliphate at Granada (1238-1492), while the Fatimite Caliphate (910-1171) ruled Egypt and northern Africa. The Caliphate of the Ottoman Turks began its power in 1299, captured Constantinople in 1453 and Egypt in 1517. It continued as the chief Moslem power until 1922 when the Sultan and Caliph of Constantinople was deposed by the Turkish National Assembly at Angora.<sup>7</sup>

Along with these external political divisions, there have arisen in Islam certain internal sectarian divisions that are of special interest to us. The Sunni sect, according to Hume, constitutes the main body of Moslems.<sup>8</sup> They are pre-eminently traditionalists, insisting upon adherence to the theological formulae handed down

<sup>5</sup>Crookes, William, *Herklot's Islam in India*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>For a rather good account of these caliphates down to 1922, see the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th Edition, Vol. 4, pp. 800-811.

<sup>7</sup>Hume, Robert E., *The World's Living Religions*, Ch. XI; or any standard history dealing with Mohammedanism.

<sup>8</sup>Hume, *Ibid.*

by the founders of the faith. The Turkish Moslems are mostly Sunnis. The Shia sect contended that the first legitimate successor to Mohammed was Ali, his son-in-law. Ali and his martyred sons, Hasan and Husein, have been venerated by the Shia sect. There are many subdivisions of this sect which are located mostly in Persia and Africa. The Shias have had a tendency toward liberalism, mysticism, and pantheism, having been greatly influenced by Zoroastrianism.<sup>9</sup> The Sufi sect, through asceticism and mysticism, developed the idea of pantheism to an advanced degree, and maintain also that through self-abasement even ordinary men may become almost divine. This sect has been located chiefly in Persia and India. At the present time there are in Mohammedanism no less than seventy-two fairly distinct divisions or sects,<sup>10</sup> so that any accurate description of Moslem culture even in any one country, at once becomes difficult, and withal subject to many exceptions, provisos, and endless disputation. The evaluation of the social contributions of Moslem culture in general, or of any of its numerous sects in particular, is properly a task for scientific research by students of comparative religion, and so must be regarded, in the present case, as of more or less marginal interest.

### *Indian Mohammedanism in Daily Life*

In order to illustrate how Mohammedanism influences the daily life of its adherents in India, we may, for the present, confine our efforts to noting its place in religious worship, marriage and the family, food habits and customs of dress, government, and the burial of the dead. Many other examples could be given if time and space allowed.

**Religious Worship.** The essential doctrine of Mohammedanism, as laid down in the Koran, is the absolute unity and supremacy of God, as thus being opposed to the old Arabic polytheism and the Christian trinity. Among other things it teaches predestination, an intermediate state after death, the resurrection of the dead, judgment, and an after life. It also lays great stress upon prayer, ritual, ablution, fasting, almsgiving, and the pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>11</sup> Wine, gaming, and certain other sensuous pleasures are forbidden, and it is made a prime duty to hate infidels and to make war upon them, though the latter is not an outstanding tenet in present-day Indian Mohammedanism.<sup>12</sup> According to some authorities there is no clear recognition in the Koran of the common brotherhood of man, or the need for a great

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Clarke, James Freeman, *Ten Great Religions*, pp. 472-3.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.



world-wide social program;<sup>12</sup> but others like Ali, a recent Mohammedan writer, would probably not hold these views.<sup>14</sup> Orthodox Mohammedanism does not recognize castes, as does Hinduism, and this accounts largely for the appeal Mohammedanism makes to the depressed Hindu classes. However, in actual practice, the caste system finds Mohammedan adherents in India.<sup>15</sup>

Though magic is officially condemned in the law, there are among Indian Mohammedans many sorts of holy men who, naked or in weird dress, go about as beggars or pensioners upon the rich, and are supposed to exercise supernatural powers.<sup>16</sup> The provocation of spirits is an important part of Mohammedan magic and is used to command the presence of genii and demons to establish friendship or enmity, to increase salary or wealth, and to secure the accomplishment of any other wishes, temporal or spiritual.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Mohammedan shrines, dedicated to former saints, spirits, or gods, may be found in parts of India in great numbers.

Much of Mohammedan worship consists in reciting, in a repetitive and laborious manner, formulae or charms for commanding the presence of the genii or spirits; and various paraphernalia, such as the rosary, an emblem of the Hindu God, Shiva, are used. Since Indian Mohammedanism believes in the presence of occult forces that have to do with the affairs of daily life, the village astrologers are called on frequently, even to the point of absurdity, to decide when the signs are favorable for doing various things.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of many apparent weaknesses, Mohammedanism has certain qualities that make it a world force. It has a world-wide outlook, a resignation to the will of God, a devotion in worship, and a determined aggressiveness that add to its powers of growth. As a result, numerically, Islam, it is said, stands next to Confucianism as the largest non-Christian religion in the world; and next to Christianity it is the fastest growing religion among the whole family of the world's great living religions.<sup>19</sup> Today Islam is a keen competitor of Christianity for converts among the depressed classes of India. Yet one wonders if Mr. Gandhi's efforts toward removing untouchability, should they prove fruitful, may not ultimately slow up the movement of the depressed classes toward both Islam and Christianity.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Ali, Maulana Mohammad, *Muhammad the Prophet*, p. 276.

<sup>14</sup>Wiener, Wm. H., *The Hindu Jajmani System*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>15</sup>Crooke, William, *Herklot's Islam in India*, p. 218; also see Thurston and Rangachari's account of the religion of the Moplahs, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. IV, pp. 455-461.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>See Hume's estimate of Mohammedanism, *The World's Living Religions*, p. 232; also the comparative table following the Preface.

**Marriage and the Family.** Marriage was enjoined upon every Moslem, and celibacy was condemned by the Prophet; but because of poverty and other reasons, celibacy prevails to a degree in Mohammedan India. The Koran permits men to have, contemporaneously, as many as four wives. After the death of his first wife, Kadijah, Mohammed took unto himself, polygamously, eleven wives.<sup>20</sup> Thus polygyny, governed by the wealth of the husband, is widely practiced by Indian Moslems, though it is said that the reform movement for monogamy has made considerable headway among the educated classes, both Mohammedan and Hindu. According to Thurston and Rangachari, among certain divisions of the Moplahs, as many as eighty per cent of the married men have more than one wife.<sup>21</sup> Temporary marriages are practiced by some Mohammedan sects; concubinage, even by the acceptance of women from Hindu tribes, is practiced by certain sects; and divorce is easily obtained by a formal declaration on the part of the husband. Infant marriage is usually objected to by most sects, marriage usually not taking place until the beginning of puberty or after.<sup>22</sup> Custom recognizes the children as belonging to the tribe of the father, and as with the Hindus, most Mohammedans strongly prefer male to female offspring.<sup>23</sup>

The social position of women among Indian Mohammedans is decidedly one of inferiority. This is denoted by the fact that the requirements in a wife are: that her stature must be less than that of the husband; she should be younger than the husband; she should possess less property than the husband; and she should be of an inferior rank or station to him.<sup>24</sup> Purdah (or seclusion) is also widely practiced by Mohammedan women in India, and easy divorce reduces their domestic security. Evidently the social freedom that has recently come to Mohammedan women in Turkey has made but slight impression upon the Mohammedan masses of India, though some observers claim they are able to note marked changes for the better.

**Food Habits and Customs in Dress.** The consumptive habits of Indian Mohammedans, in many respects, differ quite widely from those of most caste Hindus. Most orthodox caste Hindus are vegetarians, and those who eat meat rarely or never eat the flesh of cows. On the other hand, Mohammedans eat a more varied diet, including meat. Their food habits, as relating to meat, are

<sup>20</sup>Crooke, William, *Herklot's Islam in India*, p. 96. Ali, a defender of the Prophet's polygyny, ascribes noble motives to it. (Ali former cit., Ch. XXX, *The Prophet's Wives*).

<sup>21</sup>Thurston, Edgar, and Rangachari, K., *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol. I, p. 28, and Vol. IV, pp. 405-501.

<sup>22</sup>See Crooke, William, *Herklot's Islam in India*, pp. 34, 55-58.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 58.



governed by regulations very similar to those laid down by Mosaic Law for the ancient Hebrews. Only the flesh of cud-chewing animals that divide the hoof and that are not beasts of prey, is lawful for food. Other animals which, though cloven-footed, do not chew the cud, or those which have canine teeth, are unlawful; these include the hog, dog, wolf, hyena, and bear. The flesh of practically all birds of prey, and practically all insects and reptiles, is prohibited; so also is the flesh of animals dead from natural causes. Mohammedans eat such a varied diet that they are said to be generally better nourished and to have more vigor than the caste Hindu whose diet is almost entirely vegetarian and inadequate in amount.<sup>25</sup>

The use of opium, wine, and intoxicating liquors is forbidden, but many do not strictly observe the law. If, however, a prohibited substance, like hog's lard, is prescribed by a physician, when in his opinion it is needed to save life, its use is lawful. Water should not be drunk while standing, except from the Holy Well Zamzam, or water distributed to those engaged in a procession, or water used for the lesser ablution. In most Mohammedan communities the women eat with the men; and among the more learned Mohammedans it is generally admitted that there are no grounds for their refusal to eat with the "people of the book", that is to say, Jews and Christians.<sup>26</sup> Because Moslem and Hindu food habits are so dissimilar, especially with respect to certain prohibitions, as the flesh of the hog among the former and the flesh of the cow among the latter, it is usual for restaurants and other public eating places in India to have different menus and different places for the service of food for the two groups.

The jewelry worn by Mohammedans presents a great variety in fashion, but there is little that is distinctive. Both men and women wear patterns closely resembling those of the Hindus, and much of this form of ornamentation is used as protection against the evil eye and the attacks of malignant spirits. Moslem women's jewelry usually includes rings along the border of the ear, nose rings, toe rings, bracelets, etc.<sup>27</sup>

As to materials of dress, the Prophet forbade the wearing of silk, satin, silk and cotton mixtures, and the use of quilted and red saddle-cloths; but there has been a marked recession from these prohibitions, particularly among converts from Hinduism. Thus, a rich Mohammedan in the Gujarat (section of India) may be found dressed in this manner: He wears indoors a cap of velvet or embroidered cloth. The upper part of his body is covered with

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, Ch. XXXIV.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, Ch. XXXIII.



FIG. XVIII. CHRISTIAN MISSION VILLAGE CHURCHES. 1. *Church of the Brethren Mission, Anklesvor*; 2. *Mission Church at Veli (Rajppla State)*; 3. *Mission Church in the village of Andoda (near Anklesvor).*





a short shirt of fine muslin, and his lower limbs with trousers made of cotton, cotton and silk, or chintz. In the cold season a waistcoat of velvet, brocade, or broadcloth is sometimes worn. In the house his feet are bare, but in the cold season he will wear socks. When he goes out, his cap is exchanged for a turban or scarf wound loosely on his head, and over his shirt he draws a coat tight around the chest and full in the skirt which extends to the knees. He may affect Hindustani or north Indian fashion by wearing light red leather or green shagreen shoes brought from Delhi.<sup>28</sup> Ceremonial dress differs from the ordinary dress mainly in being richer, — the turban of gold cloth, the coat richly embroidered, the shoulder scarf bordered with silk, and trousers made of brocade or Chinese silk. Fashions vary under the influence of large cities like Delhi, Lucknow, and Hyderabad; and in more recent years the younger generation, particularly men, show a marked tendency to replace the flowing draperies of past generations by clothing of European style. Withal, custom and tradition have a great deal to do with the style, color, date of purchase, and the manner of wearing clothing among Indian Mohammedans.

As with clothing, custom and tradition dictate the manner of wearing the hair and beard. Thus, among those who have not yielded to western influences, custom requires that all the hair should be allowed to grow, or the whole head be shaved. The retention of the scalp-lock is sometimes explained on the grounds that it furnishes a convenient hold for drawing the wearer into Paradise; but it also may serve as a protection to the head. Some of the frontier Moslem tribes wear their hair in ringlets on each side of the head, and the women generally wear their hair in long braids hanging down the back, or twisted into a knot. The practice of the Prophet was to wear the beard not longer than one hand and two fingers' breadth, and the moustaches either cropped or close-shaven. Most Mohammedans, though not all sects, wear a beard. It is a tradition among certain sects that if a man does not preserve his beard, he will rise on the Day of Judgment with a black face like that of a hog; and if he grows his moustaches to such a length that he wets them in the act of drinking, the water from the Fountain of Paradise will be denied him. The beard among most sects is the sign of manhood, hence is highly respected, so that to seize a man by the beard is considered a deadly insult. However, the style of wearing the beard, or coloring the beard, varies considerably among Mohammedan countries, and even among Mohammedan tribes in India. The wearing of a beard is not peculiar to the Mohammedans alone, for in India the Sikhs

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, Ch. XXXII.



and other non-Mohammedan tribes or sects wear a beard as a group custom.<sup>29</sup>

**Government.** Just as Islam in India has no pretensions of being a well-organized system of dogma and practice throughout the empire, so Islam offers no unique, nation-wide element of government. It is said, however, that the Mohammedans in larger numbers than their percentage of the population, because of their aggressiveness, tend to assume posts of importance in government, business, and the professions. This tendency is shown particularly in some of the central and southern provinces where the Mohammedan population is relatively small.

The religious ideals of a Supreme Ruler exercising absolute authority, and of a devout religionist yielding humble submission, have tended toward an autocratic form of government. Thus many of the Independent Indian states are said to be absolute monarchies, or practically so; and while many of them are regarded as rather efficient, all ultimately are under general supervisory authority of the British Government. Moslems in the course of their history have set up some strong dominions in various countries; but at the present time, according to Hume, there is no notably successful self-governing national administration which was started by Moslems.<sup>30</sup> The new and growing Kingdom of Arabia, however, may prove an exception.

**Burial of the Dead.** Mohammedans generally bury their dead. They also believe that men have three souls or spirits; the lower or animal spirit; the travelling spirit which leaves the body during sleep and causes dreams; and the lofty spirit which never leaves the body, even after death.<sup>31</sup> With such a belief as a background it is easy to see how Mohammedanism took on many of the Hindu superstitions, beliefs in malignant spirits, and even idolatry.

These beliefs give rise to certain queer burial customs. Certain sects sometimes tie a camel at the tomb of a departed friend, and starve it to death, reasoning that the deceased will mount on its back on the Day of Resurrection. Others believe that the soul of a murdered man assumes the form of an owl at his death, and in this form hovers over his tomb until his death is avenged. Further, according to Crooke, it is a common custom for Mohammedans in order to baffle the ghost of a departed friend and prevent it from returning, to remove the corpse through an opening in the wall, as was done at the burial of Akbar and Shah Jahan.<sup>32</sup> In

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Hume, Robert Ernest, *The World's Living Religions*, p. 212.

<sup>31</sup>Crooke, William, *Harlot's Islam in India*, p. 189.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

some parts of India on the twelfth day of the Spring Festival,—the day of the supposed union of departed saints with the Supreme Spirit, the people celebrating the festival sit up all night reading the Koran and other sacred books, and the women bring food, aloe wood and money, burn frankincense, recite the Fatiha, give sweets to the men in charge, etc., all praying that the merit of these acts may pass to the souls of the dead. Thus there have grown out of their beliefs in an after-life strange ceremonials in the burial of their dead, and a number of religious festivals, some of which are characterized by buffoonery and devil-dancing.

### Summary

First, in a way of brief review, it may be said that in a true sense there are today really no *national* culture patterns in Indian Mohammedanism, partly because there is no great Mohammedan political division of long-term endurance which can be regarded as its principal exponent, and partly because of its numerous sectarian divisions. In spite of these divisions, however, there is sufficient likemindedness among the various sects to make them more or less openly opposed to Hinduism and other indigenous socio-religious groups.

Second, the Mohammedanism of India has absorbed much of the mysticism and idolatry of the Hindus, particularly in central and southern India. This is true even though Indian Mohammedans maintain a certain adherence to the faith as expounded by the Prophet and his followers. Yet these two great religions have their points of contrast. "Islam remains a religion of the desert, protestant, doctrinally insistent on one transcendent God, iconoclastic, democratic, manifest in united prayer and public worship, vitally connected with an Islamic world that recognizes no geographical limits. Hinduism remains a religion of the forest, catholic, convinced of God's immanence but not crystallizing its convictions into a creed, idolatrous, aristocratic, expressing itself in the minute ritual of the home and geographically restricted by the sea and the Himalayas."<sup>3</sup>

Third, Mohammedan ways of life and religion are closely integrated because the Mohammedan religion places great emphasis upon rites, ritual, the keeping of observances in food, dress, labor, recreation, etc., especially prayer ritual. Withal, Islam as a faith does not seem to be fundamentally concerned with the social relations of its devotees or their present conditions of life. Kismet, the concept of deity as being coldly arbitrary, the ready

<sup>3</sup>Mayhew, Arthur, *former cit.*, p. 83.



reliance upon physical force, and excessive appeals to fear and reward to attain its ends, a low estimate of women, the lack of a great social program, and its animistic beliefs and practices, are elements of the Islamic faith which are stumbling blocks to social progress in India. Yet, it has elements of strength, such as piety, a fearless devotion to its principles, and a world-wide outlook.

## Chapter XVIII

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN INDIA

In previous chapters we have given some account of the more important religions of India, and in some cases we have contrasted their teachings with those of Christianity. Thus we have been able to present important teachings of the latter, which obviates further description here. It is the purpose of the present chapter to discuss Christianity as an important religion rather narrowly from the standpoint of the practical workings of the Christian missionary enterprise and the missionaries involved.

#### *Historical Backgrounds of the Christian Missionary Enterprise*

**Early Missionaries.** Students of Christian missions in India who have not reviewed the historical backgrounds of missions are apt to make the mistake of looking upon them as enterprises of relatively modern times only. This, however, is an erroneous supposition. Christian missions seemed to have begun in India as early as Apostolic times. Legend and history relate how St. Thomas, one of the original Twelve Apostles, and known by some as the Evangelist of Parthia, came to Malabar, the southwest coast of India, and founded there a Christian church. Thence, the story runs, he crossed over to Mylapur, a suburb of the city of Madras, where he established a mission and eventually met martyrdom. In 1547 the Portuguese rebuilt the shrine of his martyrdom on Mt. St. Thomas. The writer recalls visiting this shrine and having an attendant reverently point out a lighted crypt where the body of St. Thomas was reputed to have lain before his bones were finally transferred to Edessa, the Syrian city whence the evangelist started on his missionary tour of South India.

St. Thomas, as an earnest and active evangelist, has often been likened to St. Paul; and, like St. Paul, he probably met exiled Jews who had long before preceded him to the places visited by him on his missionary journeys. By reference to Jewish history, we recall that the great Assyrian King Sargon II (722 B. C.) carried



away the Ten Tribes of Israel into captivity whence they became "lost" to history; and later the equally famous Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, sacked and destroyed Jerusalem (586 B. C.) and led the remaining tribes of rebellious Jews into the Babylonian captivity. The earlier Egyptian exile, ending about 1470 B. C., along with the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, and later the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. by Titus, were but major episodes in the Jewish history resulting in a wide dispersal of these people in what is today northeastern Africa, India, countries of the Near East, and the islands and countries of the Mediterranean Sea.

That the Christian missionary enterprises of India had continuity and growth by the addition of Christian refugees from Persia was noted as early as the fourth century A. D.,<sup>1</sup> and Comas Indicopleustes, a traveller of the sixth century, found Christian churches in Ceylon, Malabar, Caliana (North Bombay), and Calcutta.<sup>2</sup>

In 1498 occurred a historical episode which greatly accelerated the coming of Christian missionaries to India. In that year the Portuguese mariner, Vasco da Gama, rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached the Malabar coast. This facilitated the Portuguese colonization of South India and the forming of Jesuit missions there. It is said that François de Xavier (1506-1552), a most energetic and pious Jesuit missionary, established forty-five missions in Travancore alone (1542), pushed on to Mylapur to visit the traditional tomb of St. Thomas, visited Ceylon, Malacca, and later Japan and China, where, in the latter country, he died of fever in 1552. As apostolic nuncio for India and actively aided by the Pope, he greatly expanded the scope of the Christian church in that country.<sup>3</sup>

**Later Developments.** From about 1800 on, and more particularly for the past fifty years, we note a vast expansion of the Protestant missionary work in India. Many of the early Protestant missionaries founded colleges and other schools to aid in leadership training, and hospitals and dispensaries to help in overcoming the physical difficulties of a hot climate and wide-spread disease. Among these early Protestant missionaries, whose names have been immortalized in Indian missionary work, were William Carey (1793), Bishop Heber (1823), Alexander Duff (1830), John Wilson (1835), and Adoniram Judson (1812). A vast number of more recent missionaries crown with fine accomplishment the work so well begun by the earlier fathers just mentioned.

The development of Christian missionary work in India, how-

<sup>1</sup> *Alcock's Universal Church History*, Vol. 1, p. 502, Robert Clark Co., 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Fisher, George P., A History of the Christian Church*, Scribner, 1898.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

ever, has not been free from internal disturbances. The rather favorable growth of the early Christian church in South India was greatly checked by internal dissensions over matters regarding Hindu usages and rites (1606 to 1744). The King of Portugal and the Pope also were involved in a controversy which resulted in an attempt to suppress the Jesuits, and as a result for some time there occurred many bloody massacres. Thus Indian missions, which in 1700 were reported to have from 1,500,000 to 2,500,000 Catholic Christians, by 1800 were little more than scattered ruins.<sup>4</sup> Today, after the lapse of 200 years, the total number of Christians reported throughout India is only about twice the highest number estimated for 1700; and today there are found in India many of the denominational and sectarian differences that have split up the Christian churches in the home lands into useless rivalries and uneconomic effort. However, there is current an effort in both South India and North India toward unifying the church. The Indian Christians generally do not seem to understand the sectarian rivalry within the church, and many do not want it; but it will probably be some time before the movement toward union will proceed far on a national basis.

### *The Objectives of Christian Missionary Work*

While the writer was a member of a foreign missions study group at college a number of years ago, the question, "Why send the Gospel to the heathen?" became the focus of animated discussion. One budding young "theologue" in the group maintained that all those who were not converted to Christianity went to Hell after death; therefore in order to save multiplied millions of heathens from Hell, he urged that we should preach to them the Gospel. Others of the group thought that probably those who never had the opportunity of hearing the Gospel might not go to Hell, for they could see no justice in such a dispensation; but they further argued that if the heathen after once having heard the Gospel did not obey its call, they then surely would be lost. This was considered by some of the study group an argument against foreign missions. Others of the group who dissented from both these points of view, and who were regarded by some of their fellows as dangerously liberal in their views, thought that "heathenism" was a relative term, and maintained that what the so-called heathen needed was not so much the acceptance of the theologies from the West as an inspiration to intelligent self-help along many lines. The latter group also argued that it was not so much a matter of

<sup>4</sup>James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Scribner, 1926



*belief*, as a matter of *right living* that should interest Christian missionaries in their work among retarded peoples.

Possibly other views on missions were expressed by members of this group; but, rather interesting to relate, when the writer, while visiting India, asked missionaries the purpose of their presence and their labors in that country, there was a lack of unanimity of opinion among them along certain lines. While probably all professed the central importance of leading the people of India to accept the teachings of Christ as the way to salvation, there was a wide difference of opinion as to *how* it should be done. Some of those whom we might term "fundamentalists," believed that evangelization along the lines of a literal interpretation of the Bible was the only real reason for the presence of Christian missionaries in that country. They also maintained that the native religions had little or nothing helpful to offer, hence must be entirely overthrown by Christianity. This group also looked with suspicion, if not with open hostility, upon many current missionary activities obviously not closely connected with preaching and baptism. Others, whom we might term "liberals", while seemingly no less devout than the former group, looked upon education, hospitalization, improvement in government, and other similar nation-building activities as essentially an organic part of evangelistic work, broadly conceived. In other words, as one young missionary put it: "Christianity is a way of life; and possibly the most effective preaching one could do among such a religious-minded people as the Indians, is to live the good life from day to day in their presence." Many of these liberals could also see numerous values in the native religions and culture, and seemed anxious to understand the indigenous philosophies and religions of the land in order that an Oriental rather than an Occidental interpretation might be given the Christian Gospel.

That missionaries in foreign lands have not been able to agree wholly upon their objectives and methods was further shown in the expression of attitude toward the findings of the International Missionary Council which met in Jerusalem in 1928. Among other significant findings of this Council we read: "In this endeavor [Christian evangelization] we realize that man is a unity, and that his spiritual life is indivisibly rooted in all his conditions—physical, mental, and social. We are, therefore, desirous that the program of missionary work among all peoples may be sufficiently comprehensive to serve the whole man in every aspect of his life and relationships."<sup>3</sup> Some of the missionaries interviewed by the present writer thought that in such declarations of purpose the Jerusalem

<sup>3</sup>The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. xxi, quoting the Report of the International Missionary Council, 1928.



FIG. XIX. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY HOMES. 1. Home of Dr. Sam Higginbottom, President of Allahabad Christian College; 2. Home of Rev. F. G. Williams, Principal of the Ushagram Mission Schools; 3. Home of the Head Mistress of the Ushagram Mission Schools; 4. Home of Rev. J. C. Pace, Principal of the Inyrahom Institute, Ghaziabad.





Council had capitulated to the higher critics and liberalists, and had thereby done the missionary enterprise a great harm, since, according to their view, approval was thus placed upon many activities not strictly evangelistic in nature. This group, while probably not large in number, would provide for "secular education," hospitalization, village improvement, and such activities only as they contribute directly and demonstrably to "soul-saving." Others approved this declaration of the Jerusalem Council as sound from every angle, and regarded it as a substantial charter for carrying on good works along many lines, including religious worship and education. It is obvious that these two views, while probably not inherently mutually antagonistic, when pushed to their extreme conclusions, as interpreted by their supporters, in practice, actually become mutually antagonistic. On more than one occasion, for example, the evangelist of a mission was heard to criticize the expenditure of mission money for the support of agricultural education in his locality. One mission "training" school composed of whole families, aggregating over three hundred men, women and children, provided these "students" food, shelter, clothing, and education at mission expense. The evangelist in charge did not want a farm to be connected with the institution for the purpose of partial self-support because, according to his views, such farm work and education therefore were grossly materialistic. On the other hand, many missionaries, subscribing to the Jerusalem "charter", look upon famine, pestilence, filth, ignorance, debt, inadequate protection of life and property, etc., as direct challenges to the best that is in Christianity; and in order to carry the Gospel to these backward peoples, they maintain that attention must be given to these serious problems. Nation-building and ultimate self-support of the Christian church among these peoples, they hold, call for a solution of these problems.

### *What the Missions are Doing*

At different places in this book, thus far, we have referred to the work of Christian missionaries in India and have, by suggestion and indirection, presented some ideas as to its nature. Now we shall give our readers a more concrete, though highly abbreviated, description of its nature and scope.

**Education.** The early Christian missionaries who came to India met many discouragements and hardships that present-day missionaries do not experience, or at least do not generally experience in such difficult forms. One of these difficulties was making entrée to the field itself. Not only did they have to learn the indigenous languages, presumably without the help of schools, but they had



to learn a great deal about the manners and customs of the people that would assist them in their evangelization work. The early Protestant missionaries, especially, soon found it necessary to set up village schools whereby they could make an approach to the masses through the children. However, the natives often were suspicious and fearful of the motives of the missionaries, and held back. But the missionaries sometimes overcame this difficulty by actually hiring the children to attend school. Even though the amounts paid were small, the money was an acceptable supplement to the meagre incomes of the poverty-stricken masses. Thus educational work eventually spread, and has been directed along many lines (Fig. VI).

While some missionaries questioned the spending of mission funds on general education and some kind of special education, they found that a degree of literacy was necessary for reading the Bible in village evangelical work. Consequently, practically all missions now have elementary schools of their own, and a few confine the reading material almost wholly to the Bible and other religious literature. Many of the mission schools receive grants-in-aid from the Government, and hence, have to meet certain regulations of the Government. Many of these elementary schools, middle schools and high schools, however, are in the hands of trained teachers from western countries, and the subject-matter offered, as well as the methods of instruction employed, often do credit to the best in the home lands. A quotation from the school paper of the Methodist Episcopal Mission School at Ushagram, near the City of Asansol, illustrates this fact: "Ushagram is a school community of some 450 boys and girls and 35 teachers of whom 150 are resident. The colony is built in the form of a village on a campus of 50 acres. Student government is by elected panchayats (counselors). There are a cooperative society, library, farm, gardens, shops and welfare centers. Education is carried on from nursery school to Calcutta University matriculation. Classes are co-educational in lower grades branching into separate departments. Each student must choose a vocation and pass an examination in it before being allowed to sit for the University examination. Vocations offered: (for boys) bookbinding, printing, carpentry, agriculture, weaving, art, music; (for girls) weaving, home science, cookery, sewing, art, and music. Manual labor is a part of the curriculum."<sup>4</sup> The writer had the pleasure of visiting this and a number of other excellent mission schools throughout India. Some of these schools, such as those at Moga, Allahabad, Anklesvar, Ongole, and Ghaziabad are

<sup>4</sup>Ushagram, Vol. III, No. 1, April, 1933; also see an excellent description of the Rural Community Mission School at Moga by Wm. J. McKee, in his *Developing a Project Curriculum for Village Schools in India*, Ch. IX, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

doing excellent work in the training of teachers for village service, and others such as at Katpadi, Sangli, and Etah, as well as some of those schools above mentioned, are doing most excellent agricultural educational and village improvement work. Some schools, such as that at Palmaner, are especially designed for the training of girls in art and household science, while such centers as the Y. M. C. A. at Martandam are doing most excellent rural leadership training and education along many lines. Many of the missions also maintain normal schools for teacher training very much along the lines of such institutions in America, and there are also theological seminaries and medical schools for the training of preachers and doctors. Many other very stimulating centers of mission work visited by the writer could easily be mentioned if space permitted; but it is not our purpose to do more than show broadly the nature of mission educational effort.

As is sometimes found in the home lands, mission schools are not always above criticism. The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry found many to be poor and ineffective. Many were taught by native teachers who also served as pastors and who were inadequately prepared for either job. Some were supervised by missionaries with no special training in pedagogy or school supervision. In commenting upon the problems in the general educational situation in the Indian mission fields, Professor Sipple of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry says, in part: "Education has become a stupendous enterprise employing fully half the [mission] workers and half the funds. Large sums have been invested in school buildings of all kinds, and education has become a 'vested interest.' It would be impossible for the Indians to support this expensive system if it were turned over to them." Professor Sipple continues:

"Mission institutions are feeling keenly the competition from Government and other agencies making it imperative for them to adopt standards that call for larger investments in plant and personnel. Hence the problem confronting mission administration is how, in the face of increasing demands and stationary or decreasing budgets, to make the necessary adjustments . . . . The question of efficiency of mission education looms large. In the past mission schools were the best . . . . Today Government and other agencies surpass them greatly in number, and in some cases in standards as well."<sup>†</sup> In 1927 Government "recognized" over 12,000 educational institutions operated by Protestant and Catholic missions, which constituted six per cent of all the schools in India, Government, mission, and private. Of course, there were many more which were not recognized by Government. These recognized mission

<sup>†</sup>The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, p. 296.



schools also enrolled nearly 600,000 pupils, or six per cent of all the pupils enrolled in the recognized schools in India.<sup>8</sup> Now that Government and private agencies are beginning to show such keen interest in education, especially in the secondary and collegiate fields, some advocate that missions should gradually withdraw from the latter two fields and concentrate on women's education and elementary education. However, those who have made a first-hand investigation of Indian mission schools generally praise the pioneering spirit and the fine accomplishments of these schools and their sponsors, and wish them to continue, subject to certain adjustments.

**The Mission of Healing.** As pointed out in previous chapters, the health and sanitation problems of India are many, and most of them are of a very difficult nature. But since the British first came to this country, these problems have had constructive treatment. The British first established hospitals and dispensary service to take care of government officials and the army, together with their families and employees. This service has been greatly expanded in recent years so that government hospitals and dispensaries are very well distributed throughout the whole of India, though they are concentrated largely in the cities. In 1931 there were reported 6,291 government, mission, and private hospitals and dispensaries scattered throughout India, but there were many more which, for one reason or another, did not report to Government. In recent years the health service of the country has been greatly assisted by the veterinary and famine relief service, and by the personal efforts of wide-awake civil officials, such as Mr. F. L. Brayne, formerly of Gurgaon District.<sup>9</sup>

In this medical and village sanitary improvement work Christian missions have had a prominent part. In a publication of the Christian Medical Association of India for August, 1930, there were listed 193 mission hospitals. Of these 78 were general hospitals or hospitals for men, 98 were for women and children, and 17 were unclassified. According to Dr. Wampler's survey in the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, but few of these mission hospitals, if any, have been placed where they were not most needed; but some missions have built more hospitals than they can either finance or man adequately.<sup>10</sup> According to Dr. Wampler's findings: "There are many hospital buildings without a foreign doctor, some with only one, and some without any doctor at all. One of the leading

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 297-299. A recognized school is one that follows the course of study prescribed by Government and that otherwise complies with governmental requirements. See a discussion of Indian Schools in Chapter V.

<sup>9</sup>See Mr. Brayne's books: *The Remaking of Village India*; and *Socrates in an Indian Village*.

<sup>10</sup>Wampler, Dr. Fred J., *The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 421.

missions has gone on record as favoring the closing of all its hospitals that cannot have two American doctors each."<sup>11</sup> Indian men and women are beginning to enter the fields of medicine and nursing, but apart from mission and governmental initiative and support, they do not enter these fields to any appreciable extent.

In order to give my readers an idea of the volume of business carried on by these mission hospitals, I quote again from Dr. Wampler's report: "In the year 1930, sixty-one hospitals treated 538,502 new out-patients, and fifty-seven hospitals did a total of 1,424,379 treatments in their out-patient departments. Sixty-seven hospitals had 80,562 in-patients during the year. Sixty-three hospitals reported 18,587 major operations, while there were 39,655 minor operations in sixty-six hospitals. Thirty-eight hospitals conducted ninety-five outlying dispensaries."<sup>12</sup> When we add to these accomplishments numerous autopsies, consultations, and other activities of a professional and a civic nature, we are led to conclude that mission physicians are very busy people indeed. In addition to these activities, some doctors have charge of school and evangelical work.<sup>13</sup>

Those who are acquainted with the situation are inclined to think the mission hospitals, on the whole, are more popular among the natives than are the government hospitals. Both outcaste and higher-caste groups attest to this fact. Mission hospitals generally exemplify a spirit of kindness that is not often found elsewhere, and in mission hospitals bribery is not necessary to obtain immediate and efficient service. The families practicing *purdah* (seclusion of women) often send their women to mission hospitals, being confident that they will be protected and the *purdah* regulations respected. It is also common for mission hospitals to provide for the observance of caste regulations of their patients as to food and housing. This is accomplished by providing special caste wards and also living arrangements at the hospital for a part or all of the patients' families who assist in the preparation of food and certain other care of the patients. An excellent example of such arrangements is found at the Scudder Memorial Hospital at Ranipet (Fig. XXIV).

The story of the establishment and the maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries in India, told from the standpoint of human interest, appeals greatly to the imagination. Having spent six weeks as a patient in the Scudder Memorial Hospital above mentioned, the writer had opportunity to see something of this side of the story. In the earlier days, and to a large extent today, the Indians generally looked upon sickness as the mark of the dis-

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 421-422.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 423.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 430.



pleasure of a ruling god or spirit, and it was regarded either as wrong, futile, or actually dangerous for medicine to be administered to those who were ill. Penance, charms, and incantation, in order to appease the displeasure of the offended gods, were the accepted procedure. Thus the sick were sometimes carried out to the shrine of the smallpox god, or other appropriate god, there to stimulate the sympathy of the god, but alas, also to spread effectually the disease. The masses, even today, make no place in their thinking for disease germs; hence concerted action in the observance of quarantines, sewage disposal, village sanitation, etc., is almost unheard of, unless pressure of Government is brought to bear rather forcibly. Many village people suffering illness, even though they have gained a certain amount of confidence in the mission doctor as the result of the experience of their friends, depend upon the village astrologer to determine when the time is auspicious to go to the hospital, or once there, to undergo the treatment prescribed by the doctor. On the other hand, the mission doctor in some localities has so thoroughly "sold himself" to the people that they flock to him for the treatment of trivial ailments, imaginary or real. Often the natives, associating the cure of illness with the powers of the white foreigners in their midst, bring their sick to the mission evangelist, or the wife of the mission teacher of agriculture, or others who may know practically nothing about medicine, and beg them to cure their friends of their illness.

**Evangelization and other Constructive Work.** In summarizing somewhat the scope and the accomplishments of the missionary enterprise in India, we should note how its driving force has materialized in various kinds of good works. As to the size of the Christian community, Dr. Fry of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry states that the Christian group consists of nearly five million Christians, as listed in the 1921 census, about forty per cent of whom were Roman Catholics, the Syrian Church constituting nineteen per cent, and all others forty-one per cent.<sup>14</sup> In the promotion of the various sorts of mission enterprises among these Christians, there were engaged more than six thousand foreign missionaries, Catholic, Protestant, and others, associated with more than fifty thousand native workers; and over twelve thousand "recognized" schools, over two hundred hospitals, and a host of other institutions such as dispensaries, leper asylums, tuberculosis sanatoria, orphanages, and homes for women, were maintained. More-

<sup>14</sup>Fry, C. Luther, *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 22. Note that the 1921 Census estimates the number of Christians as slightly over six and a quarter millions. See Ch. XVI. For more recent figures, see Pickett, J. Washam, *The Christian Mass Movement in India*. The Abingdon Press, 1933.

over, the missions promote land colonization and cooperative effort in farming and marketing, assist in famine relief and the mastery of pestilence among humans and livestock, settle disputes among the villagers, and in various other ways assist in the processes of nation-building and social reform. These activities, it is obvious, call into play the evangelist, the teacher, the doctor, the nurse, the engineer, the agriculturist, the social service worker, and other specialists.<sup>15</sup>

Many of these accomplishments of the missions are rather easy to inventory, but no doubt there are many indirect results which are difficult to evaluate. Some of these indirect results, on the positive side of the ledger, are the encouragement of the Arya Samaj, perhaps the Brahma Samaj, the Servants of India, the Seva Sadan, and possibly other organizations, to take a more sympathetic interest in the depressed classes, among whom the Christian missionaries are making their greatest ingathering of converts.<sup>16</sup> Some of these, such as the Deva Samaj, besides openly accepting, in some form, many of the principles of Christianity, also have adopted methods employed by the Christian missionaries in the promotion of their cause, such as the sending out of missionaries, the establishment of schools for depressed classes, the establishment of mission colleges for training their workers, etc. Then there are a number of men like Mr. Gandhi who are not professed Christians but who have been greatly influenced by Christianity. Some of these are among the foremost reform leaders of India today. And mission leadership in education and social reforms has, no doubt, encouraged Government to go forward in the promotion of many useful social enterprises.

But, as stated earlier in this chapter, the missionaries are not wholly agreed as to the objectives of the missionary enterprise, and therein lies one of the greatest hindrances to its larger success. In the report of Dr. Petty of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry on one of the missions investigated by him we find: "The objectives that seem to bulk largest on the horizon of the workers—foreign and national—with varying local accent, are first, the largest number of new converts possible (the character of their motives and degree of their appreciation of Christian principles not necessarily being ascertained by workers); and second, enough conventional Christian nurture for admittance to nominal church-membership, and more remotely, the often repeated but scarcely

<sup>15</sup>See other sections of the present chapter; also appropriate sections of Vol. IV of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry.

<sup>16</sup>For a more detailed account of the Christian influence on current reform in Hinduism, see Farquhar, J. N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, especially Chs. 2, 4, 5 and 6.



pressed ideal of 'self-support'.<sup>17</sup> As to the professed objectives of another mission, Dr. Petty quotes from a mission report, wherein evangelism is conceived as, "referring definitely and positively to the propagation of the Christian message, viz., the redemption of mankind through Christ . . . . Our schools, hospitals, training institutions, community welfare centers are all conducted with the definite purpose of imparting the Abundant Life as manifested in and taught by Christ."<sup>18</sup>

In yet another mission Dr. Petty found that the objectives were winning converts, baptizing them, and gathering them into organized self-supporting congregations. In commenting further upon this particular mission, Dr. Petty states: "It is quite generally presupposed that spiritual satisfactions and security are only possible to those who accept Christ and are baptized and that those in past generations who did not have the privilege or ignored it are irretrievably lost."<sup>19</sup> In this particular mission, as in some others, Dr. Petty found the mission to be dominated by the idea that Hinduism carries no values worthy of conservation.<sup>20</sup>

However, a number of agencies and forces are causing Christian missionaries, in India and elsewhere, to rethink their objectives, to reexamine their accomplishments, and to reinventory the whole social matrix of the mission enterprise. The recent Foreign Missions Inquiry promoted in India, China, and Japan by a number of leading American laymen is proving to be one of the impulses to self-examination on the part of missions in these countries. While there may not be universal agreement as to the correctness and the soundness of the findings and recommendations of this investigational commission, it has brought to light many fine pieces of work and a broad conception of the true functions of the mission enterprise, at least on the part of some individuals in many of the missions. Thus in some comments on *Re-Thinking Missions*, in an article in the May, 1953 number of the *National Christian Council Review*, by the Rev. T. S. Suther, M. A., B. D., Vice-Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta, we find concurrence with the Laymen's Committee in these matters:

1. Missions should continue, with certain changes in functions, scope, and methods.
2. The missionary attitude toward other religions should be one of respect . . . . We must recognize the best in non-Christian religions and desire to make the most of it and

<sup>17</sup>Petty, Orville A., *The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*, Vol. IV, p. 163.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 219.

not the least, because . . . these ancient religions have survived all these centuries, not by their weakness but by their strength. Therefore Christian missionaries should make a sympathetical study of other non-Christian religions.

3. The Christian missionaries . . . should not make these [indigenous] religions responsible for the current social evils . . . nor Christianity responsible for all the advantages they felt in western life.
4. Superstition is a phenomenon of a low stage of enlightenment and attends every religion in such stages, Christianity not excepted.
5. If other religions borrow from Christianity it should be a matter of rejoicing . . . We should be willing to learn whatever may be adopted [from other religions] into Christian practices, such as the art of meditation, the spirit of unworldliness, etc.
6. Christian missionaries should ally themselves with earnest followers of other faiths in common tasks.<sup>21</sup>

In closing this chapter, the writer wishes to pay a tribute of respect to the missionaries, whom he had the pleasure of meeting in his journeys throughout India. While some of them appeared to him rather narrow in their theological views and rather poorly prepared for certain tasks they were attempting to do, they, with rare exceptions, impressed him with their earnestness, industry, and piety. Perhaps the greatest difficulty lies in the nature of the task itself, so that inadequacies in missionary accomplishments are due more to the difficulty of the task than to the shortcomings of the workers. The tasks of most missionaries are so varied, that it is almost impossible for training institutions in a three-year course to prepare one for expert service. But many missionaries are doing these varied tasks, learning as they go, with commendable efficiency and fortitude. This is a tribute to their genius and devotion. For example, when the writer went the mission rounds with the missionary in charge of a certain large field, he found this man was superintendent of the evangelization activities of the mission, was general head of the mission school system, supervised a number of farm colonies, kept the vital statistics of the Christian population within that mission field, designed plans for new church buildings, preached on numerous occasions, attended many mission conferences, wrote numerous religious pamphlets, settled disputes among

<sup>21</sup>The reader will find this article by Rev. Mr. Sittler very stimulating. The National Christian Council Review which contains this article, promises others of a similar nature in future issues.



the villagers, and in other ways promoted the manifold work of the mission. A man with such physical stamina, such ability and adaptability, such courage, such faith and zeal, would soon reach eminence in almost any field of service in the home land if he were to cast his lot there. Cases like this are numerous throughout India, and the local mission boards and home boards should not be slow in recognizing their contributions. The life and labors of such men demonstrate forcefully the best that Christianity has to offer, and with a glow of approval I salute them and bid them Godspeed.

## Chapter XIX

### INDIAN PILGRIMS AND PILGRIMAGES

#### *A Common Impulse to Pilgrimages*

Chaucer, in the Prologue of his *Canterbury Tales*, after describing the signs of the on-coming spring, says:

"Than longen folk to go on pilgrimages  
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)  
To ferne hawles, couthe in sondry londes;  
And especially, from every shires ende  
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,  
The holy blisful martir for to seke,  
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke."

Then the poet, out of the richness of his imagination, proceeds to describe a particular pilgrimage to Canterbury, composed of a "companye of nyne and twenty," including a "verray parfit gentil knight," a "forked-bearded marchant," a "pardonour with heer as yelow as wex," a "none," a "preestes," a "squiyer," a "monk," a "clerk," a "man of lawe," a "carpenter," and others representing various callings.

And thus even unto the present day, real pilgrims in vast numbers go to this and other historical religious centers scattered throughout the world. Why should from 600,000 to 1,000,000 pilgrims journey annually to Lourdes at the foot of the Pyrennes Mountains, there to recount the traditions of the peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, who is supposed to have had special revelations from the Virgin Mary? Why should countless thousands go annually to Rome, there to circumambulate Saint Peter's Cathedral and other holy places, and to receive the blessing of His Holiness, the Pope? And why should countless numbers of Buddhists from all the Orient pay loving pilgrimages to the Lumbini Gardens near Kapilavastu, the traditional birthplace of the Lord Buddha, up among the Himalayan Mountains in Nepal, or to Saranath where he first began preaching, or to the great Ananda or the Shwe



Dagon Pagodas in Burma and to the other places connected through history and myth with the life of this great personage? Why should devout Hindus, in countless numbers, go on long and arduous pilgrimages to Ramtek, the traditional home of the God Ram, or to Benares, the most famous of cities sacred to Hinduism, there to bathe in the holy waters of the Ganges, or to circumambulate the Golden Temple, or to traverse the fifty-mile circuit outside the city, the pious hope of every Hindu to perform once in his life? Why should Mohammedans in countless numbers subject themselves to the burning sands of the desert, and otherwise draw upon their physical and economic resources in order to visit their Holy City of Mecca in Arabia, or at appointed times, though in far-away lands or upon the sea, fall upon their knees with their faces toward this famous city? And why do so many Jews and Gentiles, scattered throughout the world, earnestly hope some day to see the historical city of Jerusalem, and perhaps to be baptised in the River Jordan? We might continue at length to ask why we, ourselves, wish to visit again our childhood home, our mother's grave, or other places made sacred to us through past experience and association; but we need not labor the point further. The student of religious thought, broadly sympathetic with the impulses that throughout the historical past have sent men on pilgrimages, crusades, and holy wars, can trace the same impelling force today common to all the major religions. But granting there may be a great diversity of purposes among the countless thousands of people who make these pilgrimages to places of common interest, and that the sight-seer may be motivated mostly by curiosity, and the trader, the vandal, and the charlatan, like birds of prey, may assemble there for venal purposes, the fact remains that most real pilgrims who go to these places, go with serious intentions motivated by impulses of a religious nature.

### *A Day in Benares*

Thus the 18th of March, 1931, found us on our way to Benares. Knowing that Benares is considered one of the most famous of the sacred cities of India, and is sometimes called the capital of Hinduism, we stopped there on a trip from Allahabad to Calcutta to spend the day of March 19, 1931. Our objectives were perhaps not the same as motivate the average Hindu pilgrim, but we had a sincere desire to see the city, its famous shrines, and the acts of devotion performed by the countless numbers of pilgrims who come here daily to wash away their sins in the sacred waters of the Ganges, to contemplate at the numerous shrines and ashrams situated throughout this historic city, and otherwise to win merit with their gods.

Who are the Pilgrims? But after seeing the city and such of its contents as could be noted in a day's time, it is the memory of the pilgrims that lingers longest after the tour is over. Of the vast numbers of persons who come here, spurred on by religious motives, there are some who can hardly be looked upon as ascetic pilgrims: for many are rajahs and other wealthy royalty who own luxurious castles here on the banks of the sacred Ganges and come here to live for portions of the year, and if ill unto death, come here, if at all possible, to die and to be cremated. Death and cremation in such a sacred city, and beside such a sacred stream, are supposed to be acts of extreme devotion that win great merit in the sight of the gods. There are also sadhus, or holy men, who come here in great numbers to make their puja (worship) in the water of the holy Ganges and in the various shrines distributed up and down the *one* holy bank of the river. Strange to say, the far bank of the river is not considered sacred, and therefore makes no appeal to Hindu pilgrims. Tradition has it that the soul of one dying on the bank of the river on which the city rests goes directly to a happy reward, while the soul of one unfortunate enough to die on the far bank must be reincarnated in the body of a donkey. Some of the ascetics seen here punish their bodies horribly by lying on beds of thorns or on sharp nails driven through boards. Others walk long distances, exposing themselves to great hardships. I have a snapshot of one of these ascetic pilgrims who was rolling over and over on the ground, a distance of many miles, to reach the Holy City so that by such self-imposed punishment he might thereby attain additional great merit. He was accompanied by a fellow sadhu who played on a flute to break the monotony, and to win merit for himself (Fig. XX).

Many of these holy men are said formerly to have been successful business men, who, according to custom and the teachings of their religion, at the arrival of a certain age, relinquish their property and business to their sons, and fare forth upon the world as Sanyasis, empty-handed and *incognito*, to become dead to their families, their associates, their business and the allurements of the world. They beg, as a virtue, and people give to them rather generously as a way of winning merit for themselves. And furthermore, who knows but what, in thus giving, he may be rendering assistance, perhaps, to his own father or other near relative? Some of the holy men are mere Brahmin lads who are working off a sort of novitiate in preparation for the priesthood by spending a year or two making extended pilgrimages to holy places like the city of Benares where they may meet saintly men for advice and otherwise get experiences on the way that will prepare them for their sacred office. These



holy men sometimes live for a while in colonies, and as in the days of early Buddhism, some of their dwelling places become sanctuaries of priestly learning as well as places for pilgrims to congregate. But these holy men often spend their time in caves or huts of their own, isolated from the world, as well as going on long and enervating pilgrimages to holy places. I have seen these men at the public markets, at the places where *melas* (religious fairs) were held, at numerous and various sorts of public meetings, and even wandering among the crowd gathered at railway stations, grotesquely dressed, or altogether naked, with a long beard and disheveled hair, and frequently with filth smeared over their faces and persons. I remember a wedding which we attended in South India, and after the ceremony was over, a group of beggars and holy men who had been leering through the windows, almost swamped the wedding party and white visitors, asking for "buckshish" (gifts). Holy men beg without shame, and are usually reverently or indulgently received by the crowd. In fact, many of these men (I have never seen women *sadhus*) are half crazy, and the more queer and eccentric they appear, the more apt they are to receive favor with the populace. Thus a crazy man is looked upon with awe as having direct and special communion with the gods.

Other pilgrims, common citizens urged on by pious impulses, or worried by business failure, death in the family, or a lingering illness, come to Benares and other holy places for short periods, or on special feast days. The low third-class fare on the railways has increased this sort of travel. Eventually it may reduce the number who walk or roll. No doubt many *sadhus* would look upon riding to the holy city in an automobile or on a train as entirely unworthy of a true pilgrim, and of little or no value in winning merit.

Then there are the tourists from western countries, who are beginning to come here in considerable numbers. Their interest in places like this is largely that of sight-seeing; but most of them who spend a day in Benares are perfectly willing to stay no longer than a day. Probably the average devout Hindu considers them the least desirable visitors; but the hotel keepers, the jitney and rickshaw men, the coolie porters, the beggars, and the great host of panhandlers and fakirs are glad to receive their patronage, though inwardly despising them.

**A Realistic View of Benares.** Let us describe our trip about the city. Having employed a guide and a one-horse tonga, a springless two-wheeled cart, we set out for the morning. We started at 6:30 in order to see the river and the hordes of high-caste Hindus who usually come early to the river to worship. We had just started from

the hotel when I discovered that in changing clothes I had forgotten my pocketbook. That was an inauspicious start; but remembering that the insurance company in New York, when learning that we were to stay a while in India, doubled the theft insurance on our baggage, and also remembering that an American friend had his room at a Bombay hotel entered and some of his valuables stolen, I hastened back to retrieve my wallet. Finding that an ordinary lock had warded off the "thieves" for the space of ten minutes, I seized my wallet and returned with a sense of relief to begin anew a tour of the Holy City of Benares. Upon relating this incident to one who has lived for several years in India, he remarked: "Your double theft insurance was unjustified, because there is probably considerably less thieving in India than in America!"

Once out on the main thoroughfares, we became surrounded by a milling, jabbering mass of humanity, pattering about complacently in a ruck of filth hard to describe. The fluid excreta of human and animal origin which stood in open ditches, often nauseated us. In an open yard facing the street and filled with dirty children, roving goats and cows, and trash, were two men churning milk in an open earthen vessel! They stood opposite each other, the churn between them, and by means of cords wrapped about a perpendicular rotating "dasher," pulled against each other alternately with the right hand and the left, so that the dasher rotated rapidly, first in one direction, then the other. Food vendors with their goods entirely exposed to flies, the dust, and the stench of the streets, milled about us crying the virtues of their wares and the prices thereon. And amid all this "smelly" hubbub and din, a funeral procession insinuated itself noisily upon the scenes, there being a few cow dung cakes stacked on the chest of the corpse with which to kindle the funeral pyre on the banks of the Ganges. Scenes like these followed one another, or occurred simultaneously, until we reached the river. Here we went for an hour's ride by boat to view the activities occurring upon the bank and in the water near the bank.

When one is being rowed slowly down the river some distance from its "holy bank," many things of interest strike the eye. First, the bank, which recedes in a steep rise, is lined from the water's edge to the top and beyond by many different kinds of buildings, most of which appeared to have cost vast sums of money. Our guide pointed out a number of imposing castle-like structures which were the temporary or part-time homes of nawabs, rajahs, and other civil dignitaries of wealth. A number of temples were also interspersed here and there, and a Mohammedan mosque lifted its minarets and lofty dome to the sky. Our guide took me to one



of these Hindu temples to view its exterior. Carved in the granite with which it was built, there were exquisitely portrayed the most revolting and indecent things imaginable. This side trip is "for men only," and well it may be, for even not many decent men would care to take it a second time, much less take it in the company of women. The guide informed us that there is here a special temple for each day of the week, each being situated some distance from the others. A very religious pilgrim wishing to "stack up" a great deal of merit, may spend a whole week here, a night in and about each of these temples, making "puja" (worshipping) and resting from his travels. Of course there are a vast number of other temples and shrines here.

Many of these buildings are in a bad state of repair. The river is gradually undermining the bank so that numerous shrines are leaning, and others have tumbled down entirely to expose their exquisite stone carvings to the washing of the water. I wonder what the average Hindu pilgrim thinks when he sees a favorite shrine thrown down and half covered with water and silt? Evidently it would be sacrilegious to attempt to make the river, by application of the principles of conservation engineering, stay within its formerly appointed bounds; but still, to have the temple of one's favorite god destroyed would be equally disheartening. Yet this dilemma may be a mere figment of the writer's imagination, for in most life situations the Indian Hindu seems to remain calm regardless of what takes place.

Numerous flights of stone steps, in various conditions of repair, wend their way to open terraced courts, or up to the doors of the temples, or to alleyways between the buildings to the city beyond the top of the incline. In the city proper are shops filled with the most exquisitely designed silks, for which Benares is famous the world over. A visitor, disgusted with the filth of these streets and the scenes of the burning ghats on the river bank, later paid a visit to the silk bazaars of the city. Entranced by the beautiful fabrics wrought in exquisite, ornate designs, she exclaimed: "How can people who are so filthy do such beautiful work of art!" That is one of the wonders and paradoxes of the Orient.

Worshippers, pilgrims, and temple priests may be seen ascending and descending these steps leading down to the water's edge. Or if one visits the temples, he may note pilgrims performing acts of worship, and priests chanting in a sing-song way, carrying in their hands gifts or other materials used in worship. Sacred cows and bulls may be seen chewing the cud nonchalantly at the temple doors, or cavorting up and down the steps in a most nimble fashion. One cow in particular, evidently scenting the burning flesh on a

nearby funeral pyre, became excited, or "religiously hilarious," which I was unable to determine; raced up and down the steps wildly, and finally broke out toward a group of hawkers and worshippers in an open space, causing them to shamble out of her way. Evidently these folks were unwilling to be gored by the cow,—or was it a mere unwillingness to impede the progress of a holy cow entranced by the spirit of the gods? You may formulate your own explanation.

Until 9:00 a.m., according to our guide, only high caste Hindus are eligible to worship in and about the holy waters of the Ganges; later the rabble of the depressed classes may come hither to make their *puja*. Of what does worship here consist? Being ignorant with respect to the forms of worship employed, and the symbolism back of these forms, I cannot report anything except the externals of what I thought I saw. I noted that the water near the bank, and the bank itself in places, were literally alive with worshipping people, mostly adults, the men and the women being separated. Some would wade out into the water, waist-deep, and dip their hands into the water, putting some of it into their mouths and touching different parts of their chests and heads with their moistened fingers. With hands held together, palms in, they would dip into the water, and then point to the four points of the compass with their hands. Some would dive into the water and remain under a long time; others would sit on a semi-buried raft and hang their feet down into the water and mumble some sort of song or prayer. Others were washing their clothes; while yet others were disporting themselves in some other fashion in the water or on the river bank. Many of these people were desperately ill, and came here to be magically cured by contact with the holy water. One woman, especially, was pointed out by our guide, as the very ill wife of one of the ruling princes. She sat dejectedly on a sort of raft with her feet dangling in the water, waiting for the cure to appear. Of course many people suffering with smallpox, cholera, and other death-dealing diseases come here to worship in the temples of the gods supposed to have power over these several diseases, but instead of finding a cure, spread the disease terribly, and ultimately land upon their own funeral pyres by the side of the holy Ganges. As stated elsewhere, many poor pilgrims, starved and worn out by the long journey, fall ill unto death with cholera or some other filthy disease that often pollutes the water supply and premises of the camping places on the way, so never reach the delectable city to gratify the longing of a lifetime.

Funeral pyres were smoking in many open spaces along the river side. Our boat stopped for a few minutes opposite two pyres



being prepared. One was lighted before we went on our way. The bodies were carried here on a sort of stretcher woven onto two bamboo poles. The bodies remained on their stretchers until the wood was placed on the pyre, then were transferred to the pyres and covered with wood and dung cakes. One of these dead persons was a woman. Her husband, by a formal ritual, set fire to the pyre, marching around it a number of times (Fig. XV). Some time during the rites, he threw upon the burning mass some clarified butter, or *ghi*. Other relatives stationed about assisted in one way or another in carrying out the ceremonies. Our guide informed us that the bodies of married people were cremated, and that the bodies of unmarried people, infants, and sometimes holy men were weighted and thrown into the river uncremated. The ashes, and partly burned remains of those too poor to have enough wood for their pyre, are also thrown into the river. It is said that wood for an average pyre costs about 6 or 7 rupees, and on the average it takes three hours to burn a body. Varying somewhat according to the customs of the peoples from different parts of the country, after about ten days a big feast is given in the former home of the departed person.

Close your eyes for a moment in order to get a complete mental picture of Hinduism in action on a typical morning in the holy City of Benares. See the funeral pyres which are already burning; see the men carrying wood on their backs down the stone steps in order to build yet more pyres; see the pilgrims of various kinds carrying on worship; see an old ascetic squatting on his heels and making himself vomit, as a form of penance, by swabbing his throat with a long stick with a rag wound around one end of it; see pious worshippers sipping filthy water from Visnu's well into which are thrown cut flowers, rice, and other accumulated materials used in worship; see the food vendors crying their wares on every hand; note the cows and other livestock about the temples and grounds; and finally note the gaping sight-seers threading their way through the filth and the ruck of humanity, and then consider, from this mental picture, whether you can agree with the old hymn that, "Only man is vile".

**An Evaluation of Hinduism.** Probably the classical philosophers might not be willing to regard what we have just described as a logical end-product or practical culmination of their fine-spun theories of religion. Moreover, if pressed to harmonize theory and practice, these philosophers might be tempted to employ the *tu quoque* sort of argument and ask if the Great World War is a practical and logical outcome of Christian theology, and if the excessive sectarian division in western religions, corrupt city govern-

ment, kidnapping, and a number of other forms of questionable social behaviour found in western countries, are logical products of the religious theory expounded by western philosophers and theologians? They might even say to us: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her."

But what can we think of Hinduism? A friend of mine who is a professor of philosophy in a New England college tells me frankly that after having seen at Benares what I have described, he feels compelled to go back home to think his way anew through Hinduism. Heretofore he has looked upon it favorably, being able to rhapsodize over the serenity of soul that its followers seem to have; now he confesses that a close-up view of it in action has robbed him of his previous favorable attitude. Another western visitor to Benares seems to think that while Hinduism may have an asceticism that faces the world calmly, it also has an arrogance and a sort of selfless selfishness that is anti-social and cruel. According to his views, personal ecstasy, quiet communion with Higher Power, lack of concern about physical well-being, and other attributes, may, to a given limit, be admirable; but these "virtues" of Hinduism, if such they may be rightly called, are more than offset by their cruelty and general unconcern about the welfare of others here and now.

Such apparent inconsistency is also characteristic of many primitive religions. It is conceded that very religious men, regardless of professed creed or sect, may, at the same time, appear to be, in certain respects, very bad men and undesirable citizens; and a society that prates a great deal about its humanitarianism and its professed principles of a common brotherhood of man, at the same time, may view with callous serenity the degrading slum conditions of its cities, hooliganism at its elections, and maintain a general popular indifference to many moral questions and tendencies that make for war. In fact, one of the greatest weaknesses of perhaps most primitive religions is that they are unsocial, or even anti-social in actual practice. It must be recognized by fair-minded men that personal penance, much weeping and prayer, much zeal in worship and the defense of the Bible, the Koran, or any other sacred book, and much prating about the social contributions of a given sect or faith, cannot offset laziness that leaves a family in want, or honest debts unpaid; nor can it balance an indifferent attitude toward community improvement and law observance. "By their fruits ye shall know them", said the wise man of old, and insofar as religion of any kind may lay claim to social values in this life, this declaration applies to all religions alike. Yet there are people in every land who by word of mouth or living example



will maintain that religion has very little to do with behavior, particularly in "secular" matters.

Hinduism, especially, seems short in its production of worthwhile fruits characteristic of a fortunate, happy, and efficient social order here and now. Yet a friend of this faith may point out that a good orthodox Hindu is clean, that he doesn't take life or eat flesh, that he refrains from showing anger, that he mortifies his body toward spiritual ends, and that withal, he is very religious. He may even go farther and show that Hinduism, unlike certain other religions, has not fomented holy wars or bloody inquisitions, nor does it seek to win converts by the sword or by proselyting other faiths. So far, so good, the western critic may assent; but he may also declare that if a man washes five times a day in diluted sewage, such as the Ganges water appears to be, he may be ceremonially clean, yet at the same time as foul and filthy as the human mind can imagine; if he is inwardly serene while his ox or his family are starving or dying for lack of medical attention, then he is certainly wicked, even if ignorant and serene; if he spends his energy and his time making long and enervating pilgrimages in order to gaze on the face of his god in some distant place, but is too unsocial to belong to a farmers' cooperative society or health association in his ancestral village, he is really at heart a spiritual anarchist. If our western critic should pronounce the same philippic against Christians, Mohammedans, Jains, Jews, or members of any other religion, cult, or creed to which it rightly applies, he might mollify somewhat the argumentative spirit of his Hindu interlocutor who, in turn, would probably argue that all religions are true, and that shorn of their excrescences there is greater unity in essentials among the leading religions of the world than a chauvinistic supporter of any one religion is likely to see. The forms of worship used by the different religions, he might argue further, are the inessential externals determined by social custom; and saying this he might inquire which is more insanitary, bathing in the Ganges, as do the Hindus, or drinking from a common communion cup as backward Christian communities sometimes do in observing the Lord's Supper? He might also ask which is the more dignified, the quiet contemplation of a Hindu, or the noisy demonstrations of revival services as found among certain Christian sects?

Thus having seemingly argued, both the western critic and his Hindu philosopher friend would probably agree that personal and community cleanliness, honest toil at legitimate employment, practical sympathy for others, honesty, a willingness to follow truth wherever it may lead, even if some pet notions must be abandoned,

are social virtues requisite for an adequate religion, good home-membership, and good citizenship. And so agreeing, each is likely to retain his own religion, yet feel slightly sorry for the other for his seeming inability to comprehend the crucial values of his belief.



## Chapter XX

### THE INDAN MELA

#### *General Statement*

The mela,<sup>1</sup> a sort of religious fair, is one of the ancient institutions of India which yet makes a useful and a wide appeal to the masses. We do not have in America its exact counterpart, though in some respects it is similar to our agricultural fairs, or even some sorts of religious conferences. However, its origin is of a religious nature, and religion is still the moving spirit, though naturally it has attached to its original ideas many accessory or even external interests and activities.

The larger melas are usually held on the occasion of the twelve or more major religious holidays, which occur during the year, as a method of commemorating these events; and every twelve years large or *Kumbh* Melas are held at the great pilgrim centers, and the *Adh Kumbh* or smaller melas take place six years after each large mela. There are also a number of lesser melas commemorating minor religious historical events sacred to the people of the locality. On these occasions people gather from the surrounding country to offer special petitions to their gods and to win good luck by worshipping, alms giving, bathing (often in filthy water), and helping to draw the great idol car. Pilgrims and visitors are often entertained by snake-charmers, sleight-of-hand performers, and others who undergo weird torments for the sake of piety or pelf.

#### *A Mela at Allahabad*

**The Magh Mela.** The Magh Mela, one of the largest and most famous in the land, is held annually at the confluence of the holy Jumna and Ganges Rivers at Allahabad. Hither men, women, and children, rich and poor, gather from city and village for hundreds and thousands of miles, in order to wash away their sins and to gain merit by the performance of the various rites usual to such occasions. The history of this mela, it is said, extends from the days

<sup>1</sup>Pronounced may-lah.

of antiquity down to the present, and the zeal with which it is supported is attested by the vast throngs who assemble here.<sup>2</sup>

In order that we may present a realistic and authoritative account of this famous mela, we quote at length from a letter written by Dr. Sam Higginbottom, President of Allahabad Christian College: "Regarding your enquiry about the Magh Mela, I would say that as far as there is any recorded history in India, the junction of the Jumna and the Ganges has been in it. The Hindus speak of it as *Prayag* and they speak of the confluence as the *Tribeni*, the three waters, not the two. The reason for this is that tradition says one of the rivers which disappears in the Rajputana desert because of the sins of men, flows underground and bubbles up just where the Ganges and the Jumna come together. So it is the three waters meeting. The hidden river is the Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning. It isn't a bad idea that the goddess of learning is hidden so that those who would find her must dig and work.

"*Magh* is the name of the first month of the Hindu year. The Hindu year differs slightly from ours, but the beginning of the Hindu month corresponds to about the 15th of our month, which makes it fit in better with the Indian agricultural year or seasons. The Magh Mela is an annual religious gathering which continues throughout the month. Every sixth year is a special year, the *Adh-Kumbh*. The *Kumbha*, the twelfth year, is a special year, and is greater than the sixth. The thirty-sixth year is supposed to complete a cycle of great significance to the Hindus. The new moon, the full moon, and the dark night of the month are all very special days with special merit attached to bathing. A very common religious belief among the Hindus is transmigration, which, however unscientific it may be, holds our respect because it is one answer to the great question asked by Job, 'If a man dies shall he live again?' The Hindu looks forward to millions upon millions of rebirths before sinking into Brahm where there is being without consciousness.

"There are here thousands of Hindu priests. Every Hindu priest has a clientele who use his services when they come to worship at Allahabad. There are also many extremely powerful and wealthy religious brotherhoods of Yogis and Sanyasis that have a chapter at Allahabad. When the pilgrim comes to the Mela he goes to the appointed priest and performs certain ceremonies, one of which is the holding of the brush of a cow's tail in his hands, and the shaving of his head (Fig. XX). He then bathes in the river. For every dip he takes, he gets rid of 100,000 rebirths. Also if the

<sup>2</sup>The London Times, Weekly Edition, Thursday, May 3, 1934; See also Mildred Hatch's description of this mela in the Feb. 1934 issue of Asia.



hair which he has sacrificed is taken with due ceremony and cast into the river, he escapes one rebirth for every hair thus sacrificed.

"The Hindus have six religious places of pilgrimage, but they speak of Allahabad as the king of them all. There are more pilgrims visiting Allahabad during the Magh Mela in a normal year than visit Benares throughout the whole year. Wherever an orthodox Hindu dies away from the banks of the Ganges his ashes are carefully collected and brought to be cast with due ceremony upon the broad bosom of the waters at Tribeni. It is said that the ashes of the late Maharaja of Gwalior, who died in Paris, were brought and scattered here. The ceremonies in connection therewith cost over eight hundred thousand rupees.

"The first time I saw the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad was in 1906. The crowd on the great day was estimated by the Commandant of the Fort, a British Military Officer, and the Superintendent of Police, to be not less than four millions of people. The last great Mela I saw was the 36th year in 1930, and the crowd on the great day was estimated to be about five millions. In the ordinary years, the main days have from one to two millions of people.

"The crowd at the Mela is indescribable. It comprises rich and poor, men and women, boys and girls, young and old, learned and unlearned, men who have taken honours from the great universities of the West, who are internationally known, as well as the humblest and poorest of India's outcastes. Here are priests at the receipt of custom, each with a distinguishing flag on a bamboo pole. Here are thousands of absolutely naked religious men who through the practice of various austerities have attained God-likeness. They have conquered all passion and desire. What more appropriate dress than the "four directions", could be worn by one who has attained? Clothing is to hide, these men having attained, have nothing to hide, everything to reveal. Here also one sees long processions of the saffron-robed priests. The saffron robe is the color of the flame, the constant reminder to the wearer that the burning ghat is near. Here are various devotees standing on their heads for hours at a time without any support; others lying on beds of nails, all the nails' business ends up; others are buried up to their necks in sand with hot fires a few yards away; others are swinging with heads downwards over fires; and there are many other queer forms of human behaviour. Then there are beggars of all kinds, lepers, blind, malformed, and the crippled.

"This gathering at Allahabad is not only the largest gathering of human beings anywhere in the world, but in many ways it is the most unique. It is not sport such as brings occidental crowds together,—races, football matches, base-ball, and cricket games; but

it is man's unsatisfied hunger and search for God. It is fitting that India's largest gathering should bear witness to its search not for material things and self, but for what still remains the greatest undiscovered field of knowledge, God."

Laying out the grounds for the temporary tents and lodgings of these vast assemblages that meet here so as to take care of the problems of sanitation, food and water supply, the orderly disposal of the milling throngs, etc., is a herculean task in social engineering, calling for and receiving governmental aid. The allocating of space, and otherwise providing for the purely religious exercises, to say nothing of providing space for the vast throng of hawkers, merchants of every description, and entertainers, is a task that calls for serious attention. Yet this is done repeatedly, time after time, with a routine of precision and calmness that puts to shame the nervous tension and ballyhoo that accompany so many of the great fairs of similar proportions in western countries.

The smaller melas are not as spectacular or complex affairs; yet the same desire for social intercourse with one's fellows, the same desire to enjoy the reciters' narrations of the deeds of the holy heroes, and the same desire to win merit with the gods, call people to enjoy the occasions of the lesser melas very much the same as the major melas of wider national fame.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Wiser, in describing a small mela at the village of Karimpur, writes: "Women of various castes go to the tomb of the departed chief who is being honored at this time and make offerings of grain, pice (small coins) and sweets on a cloth which the Faqirs of the village spread over the tomb. The Faqirs beat drums to attract people to the mela and collect the offerings made at the tomb. The grain parcher of the village sells laddus (balls) of rice and raw sugar, batassas (sweets), gram, puffed rice, and tobacco. The bangle seller sells bracelets, the vegetable grower sells cucumbers, and the village shopkeeper sells various kinds of sweets."<sup>4</sup> The writer accompanied Dr. Wiser to a mela near Karimpur on March 11, 1931. This was during the dry season just before the oncoming of the intense summer heat in the Ganges Valley. The mela had been in progress a day or two, so was in full swing at the time of this visit. There was a large assemblage of people gathered from the countryside for miles around. Some were tenting and cooking in the open, some were practically living in the unsheltered open, and yet others had covered ox-drawn tongas that served somewhat as living quarters as well as a means of transportation. There was a large tent set up for conference work conducted by progressive

<sup>3</sup>Zinnand, Savol, *Living India*, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup>Wiser, Wm. H., *The Hindu Jajmani System*, p. 82.



citizens, both missionary and non-missionary, and there was a large number of booths for the display of all sorts of fine needle-work, dry goods, sweetmeats and food, notions, agricultural products, etc. Here I purchased a number of fancy toe rings and other jewelry usually worn by women, a dholak or small drum so much used in Indian music, a pair of cymbals, a number of small bells, and other trinkets common to everyday life in village India.

### *A Mela at Ramtek*

A somewhat different sort of mela was recently witnessed by the writer at Ramtek, a rural village in the Central Provinces. It was November the 7th, 1930, the occasion of the annual full-moon festival in honor of Ram (or Rama), one of the most universally worshipped gods of this section of Hindu India. The mountain back of the village of Ramtek, where most of the mela activities took place, also bears the same name as the village, which in the Marathi vernacular, I was told, means *Ram's mountain*. A vast assemblage of people had come here from the countryside around from a radius of sixty miles or more. Some were walking, some were riding in springless two-wheeled bullock tongas, but all were bent upon attendance at the various ceremonies and the enjoyment of the fellowship and the barter that such occasions afford. Some, no doubt, hoped by mysterious circumstance to become healed of disease. There were here very old and decrepit people, as well as the young. Sometimes whole families came together; and on the other hand there came unattended a host of straggling holy men, and young Hindu boys preparing for the priesthood. There also came here a horde of beggars, lepers, blind, crippled and others to make this one of the most memorable of my experiences in India.

After entering the village at the base of the mountain, a panoramic picture of this eventful occasion began to untroll before me. The highway leading through the village was filled with a milling throng of people, ox carts, dogs, goats, and an occasional automobile. A group of boys, accompanied by a drum, were dancing in unison and weaving strips of gayly colored cloth about a pole set in the earth. Along at the right side of the highway stretched a number of shrines which people were entering, while off toward the top of the mountain in the distance lay a large white temple surrounded by a number of smaller, less pretentious shrines. Along the lake side to the rear of these temples and along the roadside for some distance pilgrims were unyoking their bullocks and were preparing to camp. Others had their cobras uncovered and were prepared to give the public an exhibition of snake-charming; while yet others were cooking over small fires. Amid such side-play the

rabble pushed forward, evidently to seek a glimpse of the delectable place at the top of the mountain and possibly there to secure a religious experience. Thus we, too, passed with the way-worn pilgrims from many far away villages in Central India.

On approaching the great white temple on the top of Ramtek we noted that only Brahmins could enter the temple proper, while the low caste and outcaste could come only to the steps of the outer court, there to burn their cocoanut strips and to pray, or retire to some other shrine. Hence it appears that Ram belongs to all the people, caste and outcaste, though his worship was not done along strictly democratic lines. But the great white temple surrounded by nutshells and other filth, seemed somewhat out of place, especially so long as one gazed upon this filth and the rabble, rather than upon the verdant background and blue sky that gave the temple so grand a natural setting. Evidently this temple is like many others seen in this interesting country. The superstructure is architecturally pleasing to the eye, the myth and romance connected with its building and its subsequent history appeal to the imagination, but the premises are so cluttered with filth and the people resorting to the temples so broken, diseased and untidy, as to make one forget, at least temporarily, the pleasanter aspects of what is before him.

But many have come, on this occasion, to worship in some of the special shrines about the mountain top. One of them is the shrine of the pig. This is a huge image of a pig, probably 8 feet high, 10 or 12 feet long, and 18 inches from the belly to the floor. The pig is colored carmine about the head, is richly festooned with flowers, and is housed in a luxurious masonry shrine approached by long stone steps. Here many worshippers take their turn in crawling under the pig's belly from one side to the other. Children are "put through" by their parents, and big fat people "squeeze through" in some fashion. The idea in such performances is that the worshipper's sins are extirpated through gaining the favor of the holy pig! As the worshippers pass out they rub a little powdered coloring matter off the pig and daub it around over their faces and other parts of their anatomy.

Another shrine was Sita's Pool. Now Sita was the faithful wife of Ram, and upon returning from an abduction, a cleansing pool was set aside especially for her and named after her. Though Sita long since has gone to dwell among the gods, or to be reincarnated in the body of some animal or human being, her pool still exists as a shrine for worship. The pool is surrounded by masonry, and is entered by a long flight of stone steps leading down to the water. The water is surface water caught during the rainy season



and retained by the masonry. The water is absolutely filthy, covered with green scum, and contains mosquito larvae and probably enough other harmful life to pollute a whole township; but our Hindu friends were drinking this "holy" water, were ceremoniously washing their faces in it, and were carrying vessels full of it away to their homes.

There was about here also a horde of sacred monkeys. They live here and are worshipped as gods. I had a camera along and got a picture of one of these "holy gentlemen" as he was being piously fed by a group of pilgrims (Fig. XVI). And to these monkeys, there "hangs" a tale! It appears that Ram and his Sita were living happily together on their mountain when along came Ravana, the demon-king of Ceylon, who stole Sita. This reminds one of the equally legendary case of Paris who stole fair Helen from her Greek husband and carried her away to Troy and thereby precipitated the Trojan War. Ram followed the fleeing couple south, but they escaped to Ceylon. As Ram had no way of crossing over to that island, the monkeys of that region, so mythology has it, out of sympathy toward him in his troubles, set about to help him to get to Ceylon to recover Sita. In order to repay the monkeys for their kindness, Ram granted unto them divine attributes and brought a number of them home with him to guard Sita. The monkeys are present there even to this day, to defend the honor of Ram's household!

Pushing our way through the crowd of way-worn worshippers and chattering monkeys, we climbed out on the tower of one of the shrines open to the public. A panoramic view of the valley below, shimmering with its green leaves and small lakes in the descending Indian sun, was grand to behold. It was a welcomed momentary surcease from reflecting upon a depressing afternoon's experiences at one of India's holy places. I "snapped" a very good view of this scene with my camera, but when I reflected what lay between me and the distant lake at the end of this vista, my heart sank in anguish. Only a few fleeting minutes previous to this, we wended our way up this hill, climbing numerous stone steps, skirting scores of shrines and images, and only momentarily could I forget what I saw. There were lining this pathway, which might otherwise have been pleasant, polyglot hordes of lepers, cripples, beggars, snake charmers, vendors of various kinds of goods, holy men, and pilgrims from far and near. Many of the lepers were mere scraps of humanity minus fingers, feet, and eyes, and had horrid open sores. These and others were incessantly calling to us for gifts, and upon Ram for relief from pain and despair. Many of the holy men looked frightful. One in particular had long un-

kempt hair braided up behind, had a long scraggly beard, was practically naked, and was striped with various sorts of colors on his bare skin. Weirdly he would call upon the name of Ram, mumble sing-song incantations, and occasionally would strike upon a metallic disc with an iron hammer. There were thrown to these holy men by the passerby an occasional "copper" and an occasional handful of rice or sorghum seed. These gifts were piled nearby on dirty cloths or on the bare earth. The same was done for the lepers, but the monkeys and goats seemed to be the chief beneficiaries and the happiest recipients of the gifts of rice and other grains. The goats in particular fed nonchalantly among the lepers as if all were well with them!

Our visit was nearing its end. As the sun began to sink toward its lurid evening horizon, we wended our way back along the path strewn with human suffering and fanatical religious devotion. While many late-arriving pilgrims were finding a place to rest for the night by the wayside, others were continuing in their worship of Holy Ram, the god of their fathers, and no doubt the god of many generations yet to come. Much of this experience I would like to forget because of the sordidness and human suffering; but such is the memory I carry from among the sorrowing and fanatical worshippers of Ram. Long live Ram, but may the memory of his pitiful worshippers soon pass from me!

### *The Ushagram Exhibition and Mela*

In another mela which we are about to describe we find a group of meetings of a character quite different in many respects from the mela just described. This mela, given and promoted by the Mission School at Ushagram, was also an educational fair, minus the side shows and commercialized amusements common to most melas. The account of this affair set forth in *Ushagram*, the school magazine, is reproduced here in part, and in slightly rearranged form, through the special permission of the editor, the Rev. F. G. Williams.<sup>5</sup>

**Aims.** The main objective of this exhibition and mela was the fostering of cooperation among the various vocational and social elements of the community, toward the attainment of social welfare. No doubt, as we shall note in passing, religion was the driving force in this affair, as in all others of this general nature. As developed here, at the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, and a number of other missionary educational institutions, the fair and mela at Ushagram have become a truly educational project, and are used as

<sup>5</sup>*Ushagram*, Vol. IV, April, 1904, No. 1.



one of the means of lifting the community to a happier and better status. Its educational value lies in the way it is arranged, and what is included in it. The promoters have been careful to stimulate attentive observation through a variety of novel devices such as placards, diagrams, charts, demonstrations, and exhibits. The exhibition has been made worth while by showing the best results and products within the means of the community, including rural reconstructional activities, and a recreational and educational program of a varied nature.

a) **A General Description of the Mela.** Mr. Williams' account of the exhibition and mela follows:

"Big shamianas, stalls, placards of welcome, tea stalls, resting tents, paper flags and streamers welcomed the people in and around Ushagram, from nearby towns and even from far flung places, to the Ushagram annual exhibition and mela. The village 'tom-tom' gaily made the big invitational din. People of all sorts, villagers, town-breds, old men, young men, women, girls, and the invariable children, poured in, and to all appearances had very enjoyable times. We are extremely glad that our labors did not go in vain. Every living soul, man, woman, girl, boy and child in Ushagram, had almost worked his life out to make it a grand success, and now looking back from the normal atmosphere of our daily routine, we are convinced that the results which we wanted to achieve through this annual fixture have been greatly achieved. A visit cannot help but be an encouragement and inspiration to all who see it. We have noticed this year, that there was an increased interest from outside, and more than all the previous years, this year's mela has been a true community affair. The best products of the community came for exhibition. The spirit of cooperation was fostered in that this was more of a community enterprise in which large numbers took part.

"The first day of the mela was an educational item, being the day for classroom displays, the parents-teachers meeting, and the recognition program. From midday parents and others began to come in and went through each class where projects worked out by boys and girls were displayed. Relief maps, wall maps, health charts, model cottages, mountains and rivers, sewing displays, history projects, worship projects, and many more, were there to create in the parents' minds a swelling pride in their children's achievements; more than that it gave them an opportunity to see for themselves the nature of the education which Ushagram in a small way attempts to impart to its boys and girls. The model of the Taj Mahal, in clay, worked out by the girls of class VI in their history project, and models of a Hindu temple, a mosque and a

church made by the children of class I in their worship project, and health displays by the class VIII girls in their "baby care" project, the model of a mountain with forests, rivers, and other features, a relief map of Africa, a wall map of Australia showing the wild animal life, another wall map of India showing the important agricultural products, by the boys' school, are worth mentioning. We are sure that the parents had a regular feast for their eyes that day. Any amount of lectures on the true ideals in teaching would not have convinced them that "learning by doing" is the best way, and these projects we are sure made them have a glimpse of what we mean by learning by doing.

"In the evening in a big, beautiful shamiana in front of the kala-bhawan, the parents-teachers meeting was held with the Rev. S. K. Mondol in the chair. Contacts between the teachers and parents have a great value educationally, and that meeting convinced us that the parents, too, have awakened to search for true education. With that meeting was associated the recognition programme, when certificates of merit were awarded to the best students and classes, and medals were awarded to the best boys in the vocational departments.

"Another very popular day was the music day; as a matter of fact it provided a very big surprise for us. The number of competitors was large; most of the competitors were from outside, with a fair sprinkling of girls. To see the girls, coming forward without any hesitation before a vast audience, in itself justifies our pleasure at the success of that day. The competitions started at 10:30 in the morning and had to be continued very late into the night. The judges sat patiently and a major portion of the audience remained throughout. It was a surprising day for us. The competition was keen, the music provided was beautiful and the interest shown by the audience was very encouraging. At 6 P.M. the competition was postponed to 9 P.M. In the interval one of Tagore's musical dramas, the *Balmike Protiba* was put on by the boys and girls of Ushagram. This was another surprise. Even with bad equipment for staging any dramatic program, the young actors and actresses poured out their hearts and souls, and the results, measured from the faces of a very big audience which contained many who are familiar with theatres and are first-rate critics of the Bengali theatre, were far more than reassuring. Immediately after the drama, the competition in music was resumed. The day was more of a music festival day than a competition day, and we are indeed proud that the taste for pure classical music and drama has yet a place with the popular jazz of the day, and all the credit for the success goes to our music department. How keen the competition



was, is shown by the fact that most of the first places were snatched away by girls from outside. Altogether there were about 40 competitors.

"Yet another day which attracted a seething mass of people was the sports day. The morning saw the girls' sports. We were a bit disappointed to see no outside competitor for the girls' sports. A variety of athletic events, such as the orange race, potato race, flat race, throwing the cricket ball, arithmetic race, threading the needle, etc. provided thrills, and even comic situations. The afternoon was overcrowded. It was the boys' sports that saw the keenest competition and a very large number of competitors, mainly outsiders. Competitors from as far as Burdwan were attracted to the football ground of Ushagram. The items had to be graded to suit the ages of the competitors, and budding athletes had a very trying day on account of the keen competition that was afforded. They had to use the last bit of strength and muscle to come out successful. The obstacle race, the cycle race, and the half-mile race were really thrilling. The kangaroo race, the sack race, and the loaf eating items provided very comic scenes. The whole day culminated in the thrilling tug-of-war, and a team of colliery coolies threw the whole strain of the day into an enjoyable half-hour. Unfortunately they were overpowered by a better clothed, better educated team. But the black hands and black clothes went down fighting.

"Officially the biggest day was the exhibition opening day when all the elite of the town were present to see the baby show prize distribution and the formal opening of the exhibition by Mr. C. S. Dutt, I. C. S., Director of Industries of Bengal. The exhibits were all neatly classified and arranged in the boys' school house; along with this, the Industries and Agricultural Departments of Bengal ran two stalls for their departmental exhibits. The exhibits were classified under various heads: agricultural and garden products, sewing and cooking displays, painting, carpentry, weaving, book binding, livestock, etc. The exhibits entered for competition in every case had all to be genuinely produced by the exhibitor. The agriculture and garden product section, and the sewing exhibits, produced some especially interesting displays. The exhibits were kept on show for the whole week and proved to be the main attraction throughout the mela. The livestock exhibits were not very encouraging, as there were only few entries.

"The Mines Board of Health gave some very useful exhibits to the health section. Health posters on leprosy, cholera, tuberculosis, etc., model houses, bathing tanks, baby care posters, all went a very long way to make the exhibition of some intrinsic value.



FIG. XX. INDIAN PILGRIMS. 1. Sadhus at the Kumbh Mela, Allahabad, "clothed in the four directions" and ashes of cow dung; 2. Pilgrims having their heads shaved at the Kumbh Mela; 3. A pilgrim, in order to win merit with his god, rolling to Pandharpur, several hundreds of miles away. He is accompanied by a fellow pilgrim who breaks the monotony by playing on a flute; 4. Pilgrims at the Holy Ganges, Benares, washing away their sins.





b) **The Baby Show.** "Usually some strange and interesting feature distinguishes the Ushagram baby show. Last year the babies who tied for first place in class 1 (under six months) belonged to mother and daughter, and therefore one baby was the nephew of the other. This year as the babies came up for registration and examination the doctors discovered that two mothers had given the same name as the father of their babies. When questioned the women smiled and said that the same man was father of their babies—they were two wives in the same Hindu home. Their babies were five months and nine days old, both having been born on the same night—certainly an unheard of circumstance. . . .

"It was found that some 500 babies under the age of one year were to compete in the area of the Ushagram baby show. To reduce this number to one which could be handled, the committee planned and carried out elimination contests in nine village centers; the members of the committee, with officers of the Mines Board of Health and local village doctors, conducted these in the two weeks immediately preceding the mela. In these centers numbers varying from 20 to 80 appeared, of which 20 per cent were selected for the final baby show.

"The baby show at which the 100 selected babies appeared was well conducted. The prizes were awarded to the parents by the Director of Industries of Bengal, before a large crowd. Along with the baby show was a most efficiently arranged health exhibit. Among other exhibits were two demonstrations of confinement rooms—one under the ordinary conditions of filth, dirt and squalor which the village mother usually experiences, and one under scientific cleanliness with a trained midwife, as available at the Ushagram welfare centre. The domestic science class conducted a demonstration of a better village kitchen. The girls were cooking most attractive dishes.

c) **Scouting and Guiding Competitions.** "All the Blue Bird Flocks and the Girl Guide companies of this area took part in the competition. Three troops of Boy Scouts and two packs of Wolf Cubs were also present. The day was a great success. With the small girls, the most interesting contest was that of braiding hair. The older girls showed splendid training in first aid and firefighting. The large crowd of spectators found keen interest in the bridge building of the Boy Scouts. Rope bridges were built across an imaginary river of 20 feet width. Within the specified time of 20 minutes the Ranegunje boys had built and crossed their bridge. The boys also put on an actual demonstration of life saving from the large school pond, following it up with artificial respiration. An incident marred this competition when one of the "lifeless" rescues



got up and ran off before he could be artificially respired.

"The winners were the Kulti Boy Scouts, the Raneejunge Wolf Cubs, the Ushagram Girl Guides, and the Kulti Blue Birds, in their respective competitions. Among the rewards were two challenge shields which are to be placed in competition each year."

One hundred scouts participating in a mela at Santiniketan in 1923 constructed latrines, cleaned the grounds, managed the entire water supply, made general arrangements, and also gave a series of very instructive demonstrations to the villagers in fire brigade work.<sup>6</sup> The value of scout work is thus demonstrated as a very valuable civic training for the members of the organization, and the mela thus afforded them the opportunity to teach the larger public needed lessons in community hygiene and civic service.

<sup>6</sup>Oleott L. Mason, *The Village Schools of India*, p. 122, quoting from *Vishu-Bharati*, the magazine of Dr. Tagore's School at Santiniketan.

## Chapter XXI

### INDIAN ART

#### *Problems of Approach*

**Western Ignorance of Oriental Art.** The average westerner, particularly the average American, knows very little about oriental art. Most that he knows in this field is the academic holdover of a few pictures in his school books of the findings of archaeologists, and perchance impressions received from the display of an occasional exotic oriental curio shop in some of our cities. In fact, the average schoolboy of the West is apt to think of classical art only in terms of ancient Greece and Rome. Or, perchance, if he is especially favored, he may think of it in terms of a few modern school of fine arts, and a few art galleries; and probably none of these would be found outside of London, Paris and Rome. Perhaps he might know a little about a few artists both of medieval and modern times, but none of these would bear an Indian, Chinese, or Japanese name.

To say the least, the beauty and the richness of oriental art, and the symbolism and culture which it portrays, are almost closed books to the masses of the West. Leaving aside a chance teacher or school of art, a chance world traveller who has developed the talents of a connoisseur, and an occasional importer of oriental rugs and fabrics, the culture of the Orient, as reflected by its art, lies almost undiscovered before us. But we of the West need to make adventures into oriental civilization, not primarily as freebooters in search of economic gain, but as students of cultures that long antedate our own and that have something of challenging interest to those who are willing to pay the price in time, personal effort, and self-discipline. In beginning such an enterprise, as we shall attempt to show more fully further on in this and the following chapter with regard to India, we believe that art will prove to be a valuable aid, because it is the enchanted portal to many converging highways of culture leading to an understanding of the historical accomplishments, the aspirations, and the genius of these great peoples.



**The Complexity of the Social Matrix of Indian Art.** In trying to present some of the more important aspects of Indian civilization through a study of Indian art, numerous problems assail us. In the first place, India is so great and varied geographically and her people spring from such varied racial and cultural backgrounds that her present-day social order is so complex as to lie well-nigh beyond the interpretative abilities of a single scholar, or even a single school of philosophy. Yet in the Brahmin faith, the sacred literature, the caste system, and social culture generally, there is essential unity in Indian Hinduism, and there is also much in common among the Hindu and non-Hindu elements of the population. Thus in order to use art intelligently as a research instrument in India's culture, or as a reflector of that culture, some understanding of the culture itself, as well as of the technics of the instrument, are needed. This calls for a degree of specialization that is indeed difficult of attainment in so complex a situation. Those skilled in astrology, juggling, or dancing, can hardly be expected to be experts in fine needlework or jewelry-making; and those skilled in music or poetry can hardly be expected to be experts in wood-carving, statuary, painting or architecture. Each field of art, if expertly done, calls for a mastery of techniques and knowledges peculiar to that field; and each also, from its point of vantage, reflects a common cultural heritage which, in turn, must be fairly well understood if one is to appreciate adequately that special field of art.

**The Challenge of Related Details.** Finally, in attempting so delicate and so interesting a task as writing briefly on Indian art, one is prone to dally long with numerous details that enter the intricate maze of contemporary Indian culture. To refrain is indeed difficult. There are mighty vistas of gradations that need to be described between the architectural beauty of the inimitable Taj Mahal and the western type Government buildings at New Delhi on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the humble and often filthy mud hovels of a sweepers' village. "One of the greatest contrasts I saw in India," said a missionary, "was a sunset scene with workers' hovels in the foreground and the buildings of New Delhi in the background." And behind each piece of art, whether architectural, graphic, plastic, or folkway, there is an interesting history and a symbolism that clamor for recognition. All these beckon us aside; but heroically we shall endeavor to work within the limits set for our task. Thus we shall be content to refer briefly and casually to many things of great interest and importance, while attempting to give the reader an intelligent, though limited, introduction to Indian art and how it reveals the inner life of contemporary Indian civilization. This we shall attempt to

do under the following topical headings: Indian Architecture, Indian Sculpture and Painting, Indian Temples, and Minor Arts and Crafts.

### *Indian Architecture*

**General Aspects of Indian Architecture.** It is thought that early forms of Indian architecture were almost entirely of wooden construction, which were later imitated in stone, brick, and mud. The student of social science with special application to Indian conditions can easily suggest probable reasons for this transition; and the travellers who make extended tours throughout the country may easily note the materials used in present-day architecture.

As noted elsewhere, the materials used in the construction of dwelling houses vary with the wealth of the owners, the customs of the locality, as well as the accessibility of building materials. In the cities, and especially in the wealthier sections that are most Europeanized, brick and stone are used almost exclusively, and the forms of architecture and furnishings are very similar to those found in western cities. Of course in the homes of the wealthy and in the more pretentious public buildings, some wood is usually to be found in window casings, stairways, panels, and floors, and often this wood is teak, rosewood, and other beautiful woods for which the Orient is famous. But, for the most part, the slums of the cities, and the villages, large and small throughout the country, are constructed of mud—that is to say, the houses have dirt floors and mud walls, and are covered with thatch or cheap country-made tile placed on a frame-work of bamboo. Occasionally one finds a tin roof which gives a hint of the westernization of Indian architecture. Sometimes, among the poorer sweeper castes, houses are hardly more than a little brush gathered from the jungle and arranged tent-fashion on a meagre frame-work of poles so as to form a protection against the sun and the rain. However, among the better social classes in the villages, houses constructed from dried mud bricks, or burnt bricks, are often found. The writer recalls a Mohammedan village he visited in which most of the squatty little houses were made of burnt brick, and the streets were fairly wide and orderly, even though filled with children and livestock. The ancient temples, stupas, and shrines which we shall describe more fully later, were usually made of materials other than wood, and, in the main, so are the Christian churches which are of more recent construction.

**Doorways.** The doorways of Indian architecture vary greatly, as one acquainted with the heterogeneity of Indian peoples and



customs might reasonably expect. Many of the early buildings of more pretentious proportions were provided with decorative tympanums, reproducing wooden forms, and with a gable or ogee arch above. Entrances to sacred places were often provided with toranas resembling the Japanese torii with which they no doubt have a genetic connection.<sup>1</sup> These consist of upright pillars bearing one or more architraves, many of which in later history were represented in relief; and gable or dormer windows, which seem to be rather characteristic of early architecture, were commonly of the horse-shoe arch in form.<sup>2</sup>

The arch of such doorways, often in ornate forms depicting symbolically much of Hindu ancient history and legend, is usually found in the great temples and the gateways to the same. This is particularly true of South India. Often the *gopuram*, or tower of the enclosing walls of the place, was imposing and had a gateway so elegant and ornate as to dwarf the main shrine completely. At the other extreme, one will find in the doorways of the dwellings of the village masses little more than unornamented openings in the wall for the passage of the occupants; and one will note that the glassless windows in such houses of the higher classes as have windows at all, are only conventional openings having a few bars to prevent entrance by wild animals and thieves.

**Columns.** Indian columns are of two general kinds as to use: single pillars bearing the symbols of the deities of the temples beside which they are placed, and structural pillars found in the temples and some kinds of secular buildings. Some of the earlier examples of the use of columns are found in monolithic shrines,—that is to say, shrines excavated from solid stone so as to leave an entire structure within. There are said to be a thousand or more of these shrines throughout India, the best examples of which are the Elephanta Caves near Bombay, and the caves at Ellora. The roofs of these are supported by massive one-piece columns hewn from the living stone. These columns, as customary with those of temples of later construction, are usually highly ornamented with symbolic figures sacred to the deities, or illustrative of ancient myths and customs. Other early columns that have withstood the ravages of time are those erected by King Asoka about 250 B. C. in honor of Buddhism, as found near Allahabad, Delhi, and throughout India. They are of the same general construction, being over forty feet high, rising in a tapering fashion and terminating in a curved capital with hanging leaves on which the figure of a lion,

<sup>1</sup>Encyclopædia Britannica, 14th Ed., Vol. 12, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

as a symbol of Buddha, rests.<sup>3</sup> Lübke thinks that the general form of the capital of these columns, and still more the flower decorations around the neck of the columns, indicate a Babylonian or Assyrian influence which might perhaps be traced to Alexander's conquest,<sup>4</sup> while others maintain that this conquest did not last long enough to have such effect.

The capitals of Indian columns are perhaps even more varied than the shafts. Typical early forms of columns have three members; below, an inverted lotus bell; in the middle, four addorsed animals (i. e. their backs coming together), generally bulls or lions; and above, a trapezoid cushion with small corner volutes. Typical of the latter, in northern medieval Indian type, is a ribbed cushion capital which is perhaps symbolical of Visnu's nabe.<sup>5</sup> There are numerous other forms developed later under the influence of other civilizations introduced by conquerors, or otherwise.

**Walls.** Indian architecture makes characteristic use of walls, both as to structural function and as to ornamentation. Special places of refuge or defense, and sometimes whole cities, were protected by walls in early days; and sacred structures were generally surrounded by walls or a railing. Even today, many of the homes of the wealthier classes, and sometimes the compounds of the missionaries, are surrounded by walls of mud, stone, wood, or hedge, through which entrance is attained by an ornate gateway. The structural walls of the temples, as we shall show in greater detail later, were usually ornamented with carvings representing the legends and dogmas pertaining to religion; and many of these carvings, in the eyes of the uninitiated westerner, would appear to be extremely obscene and revolting. On the other hand, on many of the walls of buildings are lavished a decorative skill of a most pleasing sort. Some of these walls are made of white marble with every inch worked in with all kinds of floral and geometric designs, executed by carving or by inlaying with precious stones.<sup>6</sup> Often the panels and the tympanums composing portions of the structure are carved out of solid marble in the most delicate and artistic manner so as to appear like the finest of lace (Fig. XXI).

It is said that the fundamental elements of Indian temple architecture are indigenous and of great antiquity; but, viewing the field of architecture in the large, the student of Indian architecture can easily recognize in different sections of the country distinct influences having their origin in China, Japan, Mohammedan

<sup>3</sup>Lübke, Wilhelm. *Outlines of the History of Art*, 7th Edition in English, Vol. I, p. 99, Dodd Mead & Co., 1877.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Ed., Vol. 12, p. 221.

<sup>6</sup>Gardiner, Helen. *Art Through the Ages*, p. 412, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1926.



countries to the north and west, and also Rome, Spain, and other countries of the West. Such origins of influence are sometimes used in describing Indian architecture. *Vice versa*, certain Indian influences are recognizable in these countries as well. Indian architecture is also classified according to its three major styles, from the Gupta period onward, namely, the Nagara, or northern Indo-Aryan; the Vesara; and the Dravida, found mostly in the south. Likewise it can be distinguished according to the religious impulses which it exemplifies, as Hindu, Jaina, Mohammedan, and Buddhistic.<sup>7</sup>

### *Indian Sculpture and Painting*

As illustrated in previous paragraphs of this chapter, one cannot follow Indian architecture far without being impressed with its close relationship to other phases of art, namely, sculpture and painting. Particularly the great temples have demanded more of their builders than mere symmetry of proportions, beauty of lines, and costliness of materials. The most delicate artistry including sculpturing, carving, and painting has been demanded as well (Fig. XXI). This is due, no doubt, to the deep religious impulse so characteristic of Indian culture down through the ages; for religion and art are historically closely related, both being expressions of related innate emotions of mankind. Thus one is impressed by the religious nature of the ideas portrayed and by the intricate symbolism and the dramatic skill with which the best of Indian sculpturing and painting has been executed.

**Sculpture.** Hindu literature seems to reveal very little of the nature of early Indian cities. In fact, earliest structures which survive are the Buddhist stupas, and according to Lübke and others, Indian art, as we know it, seems to have begun with the rise of Buddhism,<sup>8</sup> though of course there was an art previous to Buddhist art (Figs. XVII and XXI).

In the early days of Buddhism, Buddha was not represented in sculpture, but was referred to by symbols as by the stupa; and his divine qualities were often illustrated by stories of his previous incarnations, as portrayed, for example, in the reliefs on the Sanchi Gates. In fact, it is asserted that it was not for several hundred years after his death that statues of Buddha began to be made.<sup>9</sup> Nor do we find in early Mohammedan art any likeness of animal life, because the Koran forbade such lest it should lead to idolatry.<sup>10</sup> However, this was not such an insurmountable handicap,

<sup>7</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th Ed., Vol. 12, p. 221.

<sup>8</sup>Lübke, *Source of Indian Art*, Vol. 1, p. 98.

<sup>9</sup>Gardner, Helen, *Art Through the Ages*, p. 416.

<sup>10</sup>Stoddard, John Lawrence, *Lectures*, Hail Bros. Co., Boston, 1901, p. 209.



FIG. XXI. INDIAN TEMPLES (B): Indian Carving. 1. Interior view of the Dilwara Marble Temple at Mt. Abu, over 1000 years old. 2. The Tanjore Pagoda, covered with figures and inscriptions (see description Ch. XXII); 3. An interior view of the Taj Mahal, showing elaborate lace-like carving in marble.





for as we shall show more fully later, Mohammedan architecture and graphic art, as expressed in the magnificent tombs, mosques, palaces, and audience halls during the reigns of the Great Moguls, made such poetical and effective use of materials and designs as to make their architectural art unsurpassed in effectiveness.

Buddhism, holding to a simple, severe, religious doctrine at first, expressed itself accordingly in an ascetic manner in the creation and use of art for religious purposes. The most characteristic form as represented by sculpture was the figure of the Buddha, wrought so as to express deep reflection and tranquillity of spirit. The aim of the sculptor was not to tell what Buddha looked like physically, but to make those who beheld his image to realize the spiritual realm to which he attained. Thus the statues of Buddha, wherever they are scattered throughout the Orient today, represent to the understanding mind a state of perfect control and perfect quiet which is the fruit of spiritual powers developed within. Later, Buddhism, as influenced by the polytheistic beliefs and imaginative symbolism of Brahminism, began to express itself in an art of a more fantastic, varied, and less simple nature.

As previously intimated, the Hindus, particularly after the introduction of Buddhism, brought elements of diversity, imagination, and creative symbolism into Indian art. The heterogeneous and animistic nature of Hindu belief made this possible. The religious phases of Hinduism, traditionally, represent polytheistic beliefs expressing themselves, as with the early Greeks, in the worship of the sun, the sky, the rain, and the forces of nature generally. Their ancient hymns, the ritual connected with the worship of these forces of nature, and their legends and customs, are really expressions of their art. The poet-priests sometimes gave artistic expression to these, and to the philosophical ideas connected therewith, by the production of such masterpieces of literature as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which many critics rank in literary merit and imaginative artistry with such great western epic literature as the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and the *Aeneid*.

But the Hindu sculptor and painter likewise gave creative expression to these ideas, feelings, and mystical speculations, sometimes in naturalistic and sometimes in fantastic fashion, elaborate in plan and ornate in execution. Such art was not merely the expression of traditional religious concepts, but also the handmaid of worship which sometimes portrayed its ideas in weird symbolism. Therefore, when mysterious awe at the unapproachable presence of a deity was to be represented, such material accessories were used as a great crowd of members, heads, arms, legs, or fantastic combinations of animal and human bodies. In remarking upon



this, Lübke states further that a higher law of artistic arrangement, and a clear and simple composition, are not looked for when a chaotic world of unbridled fancy presents itself for plastic representation<sup>11</sup>

Indian sculpture abounds in figures, and the more lively and animated the events to be depicted, the greater the confusion in the execution.<sup>12</sup> Thus at Mahamalaipu, is a sculpture relief of the six-armed Durga, the wife of the mighty Siva, surrounded by a crowd of the fighting and dying, rushing forward mounted on a lion to destroy a gigantic bull-headed demon. Siva, as Lord of the Dance, is also sometimes represented by equally fantastic symbolism. One statue thus shows him poised with one foot upon a dwarf. He has four arms, and in one hand is a drum, in another fire. A ring of fire rising from the lotus pedestal surrounds the figure, touching the hand holding the drum and fire. The meaning is that when Siva dances, he awakens the powers of nature to the dance, or life, and in turn destroys those powers so that they return to rest.<sup>13</sup>

However exotic and fantastic Indian sculpture may sometimes appear, its symbolic nature should be borne in mind. Ideas and emotions, often exuberantly expressed, rather than conventional adherence to naturalistic forms, usually dominated the hand of the artist. Thus an appreciation of Indian art presupposes an acceptance of the principle that great art is not necessarily an imitation or an illusion of nature; but that a generalized, conventional, or symbolic representation of man and nature can express both the form and the inner forces that dominate it.<sup>14</sup> Gardiner emphasizes this fact in comparing the art of the East and the West. She writes: "The difference of the art of the East and the West is not so great as it appears to be at first sight, but it is rather a difference in emphasis. The West concentrates more upon the physical aspects, the East with much greater simplification of form, upon the abstract expressions of the inner dominating passion."<sup>15</sup>

**Carving.** In the foregoing discussion of sculpture, it is obvious that no close distinction has been made between it and the related field of carving; in fact as treated here, they are often considered one and the same thing. However, in closing this section of the chapter, we should remark briefly upon carving in its more limited sense and in its more modern aspects. It is true that carving in stone and other substances has been a prominent aspect of early Indian art, especially the art connected with temples; but

<sup>11</sup>Outline of the History of Art, former ed., p. 108.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Gardiner, Helen, Art Through the Ages, p. 417.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 425.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 426.

carving in ivory, wood, marble, and other substances is widely employed today. Carving is one of the important village industries in many sections, and one privileged to see barefoot carvers deftly holding and turning a block of wood between their feet while plying it with the chisel or scalpel, is made to wonder how such fine articles can be turned out by such crude methods. But it is done, and the traveller to India rarely returns home without bringing back a small statuette of Buddha, Siva or Krishna, carved from marble or ebony, a few elephants, tigers or camels, carved from ivory or ebony, and a number of brass or bronze objects and jewelry, neatly designed and exquisitely wrought in tiny village shops throughout India. Sometimes furniture factories add carvers to ornament dining room and bedroom suites, library tables, mantlepieces, couches, chairs, and numerous other pieces of furniture, with carvings of varied designs; but, of course, very little of such furniture is used by the masses, most of it going to the homes of the wealthy and into the export trade. Likewise, much of the finely chased brass work and most of the silver tea sets go to the homes of the wealthy and into foreign markets. In some of the more frequented tourist centers the jewelry-makers, brass, bronze and silver workers, wood carvers, papier maché workers, and other workers of this general nature, have their wares on sale in curio shops, open-air markets, and by travelling salesmen. Often the appearance of a group of tourists in a center of this sort is but an open invitation for a bevy of hawkers to camp in the yard, upon the porch, or even in the halls to display their wares and to begin a perpetual process of higgling and bargaining.

**Indian Painting.** Painting, like other forms of Indian art, historically was a common means of expressing the emotions and the ideas of the people. According to Gardiner, Indian painting falls into three special groups with respect to origin: the Buddhist, the Rajput, and the Mogul.<sup>18</sup> The first two were largely religious and the latter secular. But since the impulses and objectives of painting were similar to those of other forms of art, we shall not stress this phase of the subject (Fig. XXII).

Because of its perishable nature, not a great deal seems to be known about the early beginnings of Indian painting. However, as in the frescoes of the Ajanta Caves, there remains the work of the Buddhist painter-priests, the first parts of which were made probably as early as the third century B. C., and the last parts probably as late as the seventh century A. D. These frescoes discovered to the West in 1817 are now preserved and thus furnish important evidence as to the nature of early art in India. Along with the

<sup>18</sup>Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 421.



bas-relief carvings on the gates of the stupa at Sanchi, these frescoes probably comprise the best of early Buddhist art. But Buddhism, though it originated in North India, as an offshoot of Hinduism, eventually began to lose its supremacy in the land of its origin. Thus, today, Buddhism as an important religion has largely withdrawn southward to Ceylon, northward toward the Himalayan Mountain countries, and eastward to Burma and China, and for a thousand years has left but little important art on the way of retreat. The remnants were largely absorbed by Brahminism.

The Rajput paintings, named after the Rajputana section of the country of their principal origin, were a purely indigenous art.<sup>17</sup> In it was found a wide portrayal of Indian life, illustrating stories of daily life, reaching back into early folklore, and including the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, and other accounts of the gods. One of the most famous of these paintings is that of Krishna quelling Kaliya, a poisonous, many-headed serpent. Here Krishna is pictured as pressing upon the heads of the serpent with one foot, while in his divine power, he easily holds the dying serpent's body in his hands. On each side are grouped the wives of the serpent, half human, half reptile, grieving for him and pleading for him, while on the bank Krishna's family and the cowherds rush frantically to the edge of the water to assist him. In the background herds are peacefully grazing.<sup>18</sup>

The third, or Mogul group of paintings, is regarded as less Indian than the others. The Moguls brought to India their artists from Persia, and there arose under Akbar's patronage a famous state school of painting. Master painters of this school were two Persians, Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, the remainder of the artists being Hindus. Yet, eventually, Mogul art combined certain elements with Hindu art, and thus to an extent lost its distinctiveness. As previously stated, while Rajput painting was lyrical and religious as to subject matter and treatment, reflecting native traditions and beliefs, Mogul painting was secular. The interest of Mogul art was primarily in the picturesque phases of contemporary life, chiefly that of the palace. It must be remembered that the Mogul rulers and nobles were patrons of art, some of the most famous pieces of art, such as the interior decoration of the Taj Mahal, having been executed under their influence.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 421. See also MacDonald, A. A., *India's Past*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1927, pp. 206, 210, 221.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 422. See also Havell, B. F., *Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 3, 21, 188, 208, John Murray, London, 1908; Ibid., *Indian Sculpture*, p. 188, John Murray, 1908; Cosmeryawamy, A., *Arts and Crafts of Ceylon*, pp. 227-250; Ibid., *History of India and Indonesia*, pp. 127-128, Goldston, London, 1923; and Brown, Percy, *Indian Painting Under the Moghuls*, pp. 70-100, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1924.

## Chapter XXII

### INDIAN ART (*Continued*)

#### *Indian Temples*

In looking about for a few striking examples of Indian art, combining typical elements of architecture, sculpture, and graphic representation, one finds abundant material from which to select. Practically every city of any size has buildings of elegant beauty to which it may point with pride. It is true that many of the more recent of these are fashioned in whole or in part along western patterns, but in most cases their artistic beauty is in harmony with the creative impulse of the times out of which they grew. To mention a few, out of a long list that could easily be prepared, we might suggest the Elphinstone High School and the High Court Buildings of Bombay, the Golden Temple of the Sikhs at Amritsar, the Government Buildings in New Delhi, numerous remnants of the Imperial Palace within the Fort at Delhi, the Victoria Memorial at Calcutta, the Dilwara Marble Temple of the Jains at Mt. Abu, the Hindu temples at Madura and Conjeeveram, the Golden Temple at Benares, the Great Pagoda at Tanjore, the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon, the rock-hewn temples of Ellora, the Queen's Golden Monastery at Mandalay, the Taj Mahal and many other beautiful buildings at Agra, and the Tomb of Akbar at Sikandra. Then, of course, the palaces and audience chambers of most of the ruling princes, and the homes of many of the rich bankers and merchants, are works of architectural and ornamental art. Many of these structures are hoary with age, but all portray, with variations due to religion and cultural background, the finer sensibilities and creative genius of a great people (Figs. I, V, XVII, XXI, and XXIII).

**The Buddhist Stupa.** Since the Buddhist stupa seems to be the oldest existing example of early Indian architecture,<sup>1</sup> and since temple architecture and temple equipment, among all classes of Indian art, probably best exemplify the artistic genius of the people, we may well give considerable attention to their temples.

<sup>1</sup>See especially Lübbe, *op. cit.*



The earlier forms of Buddhist stupas rested upon a circular terrace and were hemispherical with a flattened top. A massive balustrade surrounded the dome. The latter was solid with the exception of a small relic-chamber near the ground. One or more platforms supporting the dome provided stairways with balustrades for access and circumambulation; and on the summit was a small pavilion, the whole structure being topped by a mast bearing one or more symbolic umbrellas. It is said that King Asoka erected 84,000 of these structures and distributed among them the relics of Buddha. But since other reports have it that Buddha was cremated, these stories only illustrate the myth and folklore that is dear to the oriental mind, both ancient and modern (Fig. XVII).

The early forms of these structures were built of brick covered on the outside with dressed stone; but the early followers of Buddha also occupied caves for meditation. These, aside from the stupa proper, often had *viharas*, or special living quarters for the monks in charge, and there were also *chaitjas* or places for worship. One of the best examples of the latter form of architecture is the series of caves near the village of Ajanta in Hyderabad State. Other underground chambers were hewn from solid stone and these contained ornate pillars, and also carving representing the Buddha. Some of the best examples of these are the rock-hewn temples of Ellora in Hyderabad State and the Karli Temple in the Poona District of the Bombay Presidency. By degrees the Brahmins followed the use of rock-temples, even at places where the Buddhists had formerly started a series, and added to them their own ornamentation and carvings characteristic of Hindu imagination and dexterity. The Elephanta Caves near Bombay and some of the Ellora Temples are good examples of the latter.

A description, in considerable detail, of a single example of the best of Buddhist temple architecture found in present times causes us to put aside a number of early shrines in India, Ceylon, and Cambodia, many of them now in decay, and some of them having already been mentioned in this chapter. While many of these possibly are held in a higher state of veneration by Buddhist pilgrims throughout the world than some of the architecturally more impressive structures that the present-day traveller may behold, it is probable that the latter better reflect the lofty ideas and the artistic powers of their Buddhist builders. One of these is the great Ananda Temple at Pagan, in Burma, sometimes termed the "Gorgeous Palace of a Thousand Cloudcapped Towers;" and another is the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in the city of Rangoon, Burma, which some term "Buddha's Greatest Shrine." The latter we shall attempt to describe briefly (Fig XXIII).

**The Shwe Dagon Pagoda.** The Shwe Dagon Pagoda, whose history extends back into the mists of early Buddhism, has been one of the most revered shrines of the adherents to this great religion. It stands on the outskirts of the Burmese city of Rangoon, and rises out of the midst of the low-lying plain over which its golden top may be seen for miles around. According to tradition, two Burmese brothers, rich merchants by the name of Poo and Tapau, were escorting a great caravan of merchandise through the forests near Benares where Buddha was then living in contemplation. They made him an offering of honey and implored him to give them something they might honor as a relic.<sup>2</sup> Buddha gave them eight hairs from his head. With this precious gift they returned to their native land and in 588 B. C. built in the forest-covered wastes of the Irrawaddy River a shrine to house the hairs of the Lord Buddha. This was the beginning of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. Tradition further relates that when digging for the foundations of this shrine, these brothers came upon relics of Gautama's three predecessors. This goes to show that the selected site for this shrine was already sacred ground.

The first shrine is said to have been only twenty-seven feet high, but it has been repeatedly added to until its present great dimensions were finally attained in 1564. And as the structure grew in size and magnificence, it also grew to be a great religious center for the Buddhism of the East. In a sense it seems to be to Oriental Buddhism what Mecca is to Mohammedanism, and Rome, Lourdes, and Canterbury are to Christianity. The donations of individuals anxious to obtain merit, or to show their gratitude for health or fortune, made possible the growth in the size and the grandeur of the structure and the addition of smaller shrines, fifteen hundred in number; and they also provided the rest-houses on the premises constructed for the convenience of pilgrims. Many of these smaller shrines are considered tawdry and thus out of harmony with the artistic effect of the pagoda proper.

The pagoda is approached by four entrances, though only three are now in use. The arches to the entrances are most elaborately worked over with statues of fairy creatures, and are guarded by the statues of grotesque monsters. Over a long series of covered stone steps the passageways climb upward 166 feet to a great platform from which the bell-shaped pagoda, 1355 feet in circumference at its base, rises to the height of 370 feet. On the side lines of these passageways are markets for the sale of merchandise of various kinds, and the premises are cluttered with waste paper, dogs, and filth of many sorts. Yet while the place is alive with mer-

<sup>2</sup>Curle, Richard, in *Wonders of the World*, Vol. 1, p. 118, J. A. Hammerton, Editor.



chants and shoppers, pilgrims from many lands solemnly circumambulate the pagoda, or sit in silent contemplation, or lie prostrate before a shrine reciting the precepts of Buddha. Our guide asked us to remove our shoes before ascending to the pagoda, and this we did to our amusement, though our bare feet were blistered by the scorching hot pavement. It is said that pilgrims thus prepared, if they observe respectful decorum, are in no danger of harm from the attending priests.

The pagoda is a solid stupa of brick, gilded over from base to summit, and is crowned with a golden umbrella supporting innumerable silver bells.<sup>3</sup> The lower part of the pagoda, it is said, is overlaid with pure gold an eighth of an inch thick, and all the top part is covered with the finest gold leaf. The summit is encrusted with precious stones, and at night the whole dome is illuminated by electric lights.<sup>4</sup> The huge bulk of the structure, its symbolic figures, its numerous small shrines, its costly elegance, and the reverence in which it is held by the visiting devotees of Buddhism, make it a monument to man's piety, devotion, and artistic skill. And when one contemplates the stretch of the centuries through which this temple has looked down upon the destinies of mankind and served as the center of religious wisdom and comfort, he realizes that it is both a time-binder and a personification of the noble virtues proclaimed by the Buddha it serves.

**The Taj Mahal.** But it has been left to Shah Jahan, one of the Mogul Emperors, to give to India what many consider to be her most artistic and famous piece of architecture, the Taj Mahal, at Agra (Fig. I). Though, strictly speaking, this magnificent structure is not a temple, we feel impelled to include its description here. The Taj was built by the Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife, Mumtaz-i-Mahal, who died in 1631, A. D. This structure, built of white marble, is thus a mausoleum, and is but one of a number of most elegant structures which grace this famous ancient capital of the Moguls. Here are also the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah, the father-in-law and prime minister of Emperor Jahangir; the Pearl Mosque; the tomb of Jehanara, the daughter of Emperor Shah Jahan; the Mogul Palace; the Royal Audience Hall and Terrace; the Jumma Masjid; the Gate of the Village and the Tomb of the Emperor Akbar at Sikandra; the walls and the gate of the Fort, and other works of art that reflect the splendor of this famous group of rulers and that make Agra a Mecca for Mohammedan pilgrims and an attraction for students of art the world over.

The elegant structure of the Taj stands on the banks of the

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Jumna River in the midst of an ornately planted forty-acre garden surrounded by a wall. Grandeur and beauty go hand in hand here, for this garden in its ornamentation gives perspective to the structure very much as does the setting to a jewel. The gateway to this wall is itself a magnificent piece of architecture, being 140 feet high, 100 feet wide, and constructed of red sandstone decorated exquisitely with mosaic in white marble. The Taj proper rests upon a massive sandstone base measuring 1,000 feet square. From this base a marble terrace rises to serve as the pedestal to the Taj itself. The tomb itself, rising from the center of this setting, is 186 feet square and supports small domes, and a large central dome which is 58 feet in internal diameter and rises to the height of 210 feet. At each of the four corners of the marble pedestal rise marble minarets 140 feet above the pavement, and on the western side of the huge platform stands a graceful mosque. A commentator suggests that the curved domes and the minarets so characteristic of the Mohammedan mosques were deemed necessary lest this majestic edifice should turn men's thoughts from Heaven; but they also show the tender love of an Emperor for his departed queen which called into play religious emotions and an art so exquisitely wrought as to challenge the admiration of the world.

Subservient to the beauty of proportions and the grandeur of the setting of this structure is the artistry of its ornamentation. All the more important architectural details are heightened by being inlaid with precious stones of many kinds brought from the various states of the Mogul Empire. These are combined in wreaths, scrolls, and frets in beautiful designs; and around the archways, inlaid in black marble, are delicately set forth Arabic verses from the Koran. Screens of the most delicate lace-work are cut from solid marble, and panels of these in the center of the mausoleum form an enclosure sixty feet in circumference in which rest the marble cenotaphs of Shah Jahan and his beloved queen (Fig. XXI). These cenotaphs are covered with mosaic work delicately wrought in precious stones. One hundred precious stones are sometimes required to represent a single flower, and through all this mass of floral decorations runs a script of gems telling the story of these royal lovers. The architectural beauty, the delicacy of execution, the costliness of materials, and the sentiments expressed in this building, make a strong emotional appeal to one so fortunate as to see it. In fact, in trying to formulate a single expression that represents the emotions aroused by this wonderful building and the associations connected with it, one writer calls it frozen music; another calls it a poem in marble; another calls it a mountain of alabaster; and yet another says it is to Saracenic architecture what the Parthenon of Athens was



to Greece.<sup>5</sup> Though the cost was great, said to have been more than three million pounds in money, and the labor of 20,000 men for the space of twenty years, and though its beauty is beyond adequate description, it symbolizes a yet more beautiful and more nearly perfect structure, the impassioned and holy love of a great man and emperor for his wife. Though the architect Ustad Isa and his artificers and workmen have long since passed into history, and though Shah Jahan and his lovely queen resting side by side under its lofty dome have become dust, the Taj Mahal stands today as a shining example of great art and great genius, as well as an expression of an immortal love that lasts throughout the ages. This love should be set over against other descriptions of woman's place in Indian social and family life presented elsewhere in this book.

**The Hindu Temple.** Though much of the early Hindu temple construction consisted of additions to series of rock-hewn caves begun by the Buddhists who appear to have preceded them in temple construction, the Hindus also erected magnificent above-ground structures which have distinctions all their own. Many of these, centuries old and marvels of architectural and artistic ability on the part of the builders, are yet in constant use. Then, of course, there are also vast numbers of simple shrines, many of which, dedicated to a particular god or spirit, are mere stones in the highways, or crude stone or mud structures along the highways or in the market places. The latter, though expressing an intense and wide-flung religious impulse, do not portray great artistic genius. Hence, it is the more formal above-ground temples to which we wish to direct the reader's attention at this time (Fig. XVII).

Hindu temples, according to competent authority, though showing a variety of architecture, have three fairly distinct architectural styles.<sup>6</sup> The Indo-Aryan style, found mostly in northern India, usually had curvilinear spires and pinnacles; the towers were not divided into horizontal stories, and there were neither pillars nor pilasters. A good example of this type of architecture is the Great Temple at Bhuvaneswar, built in 617 to 657 A. D.<sup>7</sup> There was also the Chalukyan style, less well-known than other varieties. This style had peculiar star-shaped ground plans, represented a sort of combination of other styles, and had its best examples in the

<sup>5</sup>Stoddard, *former cit.*, p. 224. See *Glimpses of India*, Ch. X, published by C. R. Durrant, Bombay, 1903; also Havell, E. B., *Agra and the Taj*, p. 63, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1912.

<sup>6</sup>De Forest, Julia E., *A Short History of Art*, p. 45, Dodd, Mead Co., 1922; Gardiner, Helen, *Art Through the Ages*, p. 412. See further treatment by Havell, E. B., *The Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India: A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilization*, John Murry, London, 1918; and Fergusson, James, *A History of Indian and Eastern Art*, John Murry, London, 1876.

<sup>7</sup>De Forest, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

Deccan. It had horizontal stories, low towers, and profuse decorations consisting of carved-in animals and an occasional band of floral or geometrical designs. Finally, there is the Dravidian style, found mostly in South India, and this we shall describe in detail later. There is another rather distinct type of temple architecture used by the Jains. These temples usually have extensive courts, arched halls, numerous chapels, many cupola-like vaulted roofs and much fantastic ornamentation. Jain temples are found mostly in Mysore and the Gujerat. Other minor indigenous sects have a temple architecture more or less unique in style, and Christian missionaries have introduced in their church architecture and church furnishings western elements that are entirely foreign to India. However, for the most part, the various types of temple architecture and temple decoration reflect historical religious movements which in some cases were peaceful, and in some cases were attended by physical force. The temples themselves often bear mute evidence to what has happened. In visiting some of the famous old temples one may note how precious stones have been gouged out of exquisitely wrought settings by invading armies or bands of robbers, and how the features of finely wrought statuary have been ruthlessly broken by the hands of fanatical invaders who were adherents of some other sect or religion.

The Dravidian temples of the South, according to Fergusson, lack seriously in regularity of plan. He writes: "Nine cases out of ten, Dravidian temples are a fortuitous aggregation of parts, arranged without plan as accident dictated at the time of erection. The one great exception to this is the temple at Tanjore."<sup>8</sup> While, no doubt, there is a certain amount of truth in this point of view, there are, nevertheless, elements commonly found in the more important temples. These are, a group of buildings surrounded with a great wall interspersed with stately gates (*gopurams*), towers, several courts with gates and lesser temples, chapels, shrines, sacred pools for ablutions, galleries, and courts for pilgrims. The shrine proper, called the *vimana*, and containing the sacred image, was square at the base and had many stories tapering upward in pyramidal form. The *mantapa*, or porch, formed the entrance to the cell, and the *choultries*, or pillared walls, were an architectural element of most temples. Increased effect was given to the structures by means of size, and their height usually extended to several horizontal stories.<sup>9</sup> While many, perhaps most, temples had assembly halls, such halls in the Vishnu and Shiva temples, were not intended for congregational worship, as were the Buddhist assembly halls; for in

<sup>8</sup>Fergusson, James, *History of Indian and Eastern Art*, Vol. III, p. 348, John Murray, London, 1876.

<sup>9</sup>Lübke, William, former cit., p. 105; also De Forest, Julia, former cit., p. 45.



India, as in ancient Egypt and Greece, the people lived and worshipped chiefly out of doors. Only priests entered the shrines.<sup>10</sup> Because of these facts, Gardiner explains that the decorations of the temples, which were didactic as well as ornamental, were placed on the outside rather than the interior.

But these temples served a wider purpose than mere worship, however important that was. Here the King often gave audiences, the village assembly met, religious and philosophical discussions took place, as well as the recitation of great epics, songs and dances. Hence many temples had one or more assembly halls, called *mandapams*, roofed over but open on the sides.<sup>11</sup> These were often most elaborately finished in decorative art.

**The Great Pagoda of Tanjore.** In listing a dozen of the more important Dravidian temples of South India, Fergusson names the temples of the following places: Tanjore, Tiruvalur, Serengham, Chillambaram, Ramisseram, Madura, Tinnevely, Combaconum, Conjeeveram, Vellore, Peroor, and Vijaynagar.<sup>12</sup> This, of course, is but a representative selection from a much longer list of temples of considerable architectural merit that could be presented if time and space allowed. For special description we have selected the Great Pagoda at Tanjore, located in the province of the same name in the Madras Presidency. This temple not only heads Fergusson's list, as most representative of the temple architecture peculiar to South India, but is also considered by other authorities as probably the most remarkable of all the temples of southern India (Fig. XXI).

Authorities are not wholly in agreement as to the builder and the date of construction of this great temple.<sup>13</sup> But according to Havell and others, it was constructed by King Rajaraja I, the Great (A. D. 985-1018), one of the powerful line of Chola kings reigning in South India during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Tradition has it that upon the conclusion of a successful military campaign against the Island of Ceylon, and possibly other parts of South India, King Rajaraja, in order to commemorate his successes built this great temple in honor of Siva.

Gratitude for restoration of health, or the attainment of financial or military success, seems to have been a powerful incentive for the erection and support of many of the great temples of ancient India; but ostentatious display of wealth also seems to have been a powerful motive for such work. Writing in this vein, Fergusson says: "Before we [the British] interfered . . . the prac-

<sup>10</sup>Gardiner, *Helen*, former cit., p. 415.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>12</sup>Fergusson, *Temples*, op. cit., p. 519.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

tical proprietorship of the land was in the hands of a few princes or feudal lords, who derived from it immense revenues they had no means of spending except in works of ostentation . . . for the employment of the masses or for their own glorification."<sup>14</sup> In further commenting upon any plan for reappportioning among the people lands held under this aristocratic and limited form of landholding, Fergusson expresses forcefully a point of view that is pertinent to our present considerations, when he writes: "It [the re-apportionment] may be beneficent and may produce the greatest happiness to the greatest number, but in such a community neither science, nor literature, nor art have any place, and religion itself becomes degraded by the status of the votaries"; in other words, under historical Indian conditions, it has required the concentration of wealth in a few generous hands in order to create a great culture.<sup>15</sup> While commenting upon the motive-force that lay behind Hindu architecture, he states further: "The Egyptians had great and lofty ideas, and a hankering after immortality that impressed itself on all their works. The southern Indians had no such aspirations. Their intellectual status is, and always was, mediocre . . . and their religion was, and is an impure and degrading fetishism. What they had to offer their gods was a tribute of labor, and that was bestowed without stint. What the Hindu architect craved for was a place to display his powers of ornamentation, and he thought he had accomplished all his art when he covered every part of his building with the most elaborate and most difficult designs he could invent."<sup>16</sup> Evidently Fergusson maintains a critical attitude toward certain aspects of southern Indian temple architecture, with which, no doubt, other students might not wholly agree.

The grounds of the Great Pagoda are entered by a huge gopuram which, according to mythology, is supposed to cast no shadow. They consist of two courts, one a square of about 250 feet, which was originally devoted to minor shrines and residences. But when the temple was fortified by the French in 1772, it was converted into an arsenal, and has not since been rededicated to religious use. The temple itself stands in a courtyard about 500 feet by 250 feet, the distance between the temple and the gateway being broken by the shrine of the huge granite Bull Nundi. There are several smaller shrines in the enclosure, one of which, dedicated to Soubramanya, a son of Siva, is an exquisite piece of decorative architecture, even in some respects surpassing that of the main shrine. The main shrine, a magnificent pyramidal tower, is com-

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 341.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*



posed of thirteen stories richly decorated with pillars and statues, and rises to the height of 200 feet.<sup>17</sup> The base measures 82 feet square and rests upon a foundation two stories high, simple in outline but relieved by niches and pilasters. Crowning the top of the great tower is a single block of granite weighing eighty tons and said to have been raised to its present position by an inclined plane commencing at a village four miles distant,—a task that would tax the best of engineering skill of modern western countries.

An interesting feature of the tower is that the carvings are generally of a Vaisnava type, while the ornamentation of the other parts is Saiva in type; and on the north side of the tower is a figure representing a European. These indicate a broad spirit of religious tolerance which prevailed in South India during the age in which this great temple was built. And this spirit of tolerance has probably encouraged certain practices which, in the eyes of some, have lowered this temple somewhat in the veneration in which such structures are usually held. According to legend, the Saivite saint, Appar, was refused admission to the temple, and therefore it was not celebrated in his hymns or in those of the other three Saivite poet-saints. And there is the further peculiarity that the Sudras are admitted to the apartment next to the shrine from which, in most temples, they are excluded; and the Valaiyans, a hunting, fishing, iron-working and cultivating caste, who are usually not admitted to the temples at all, may approach here as far as the great Bull Nundi. The inter-caste democracy thus traditionally practiced in a limited way at this famous temple, is probably a practical approach to the removal of untouchability pleaded for so earnestly by Mahatma Gandhi in recent months. This is probably one of the unique contributions of the Great Tanjore Pagoda.

### *Minor Arts and Crafts*

Notwithstanding India's fame in the field of temple architecture, sculpturing, carving, and painting, there are other arts, less pretentious, perhaps, yet organically a necessary part of the daily life of the average villager. Many of these are connected with the prosaic callings of farming or manufacturing, and thus may be held in too low esteem to attract the attention of the thoughtless passerby; yet meeting successfully the varied exigencies of living in a tropical climate often calls forth both science and a deftness of execution that should have due recognition in a survey of the art of this country. Many of these minor arts such as weaving,

<sup>17</sup>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 12, p. 192, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. Ferguson gives the height as 190 feet.

pottery-making, jewelry-making, leather-making, metal-work, carpentry in specially applied forms, etc., are caste-limited in most cases. There are other callings of a professional or semi-professional nature which also partake of the nature of art. Some of these are music, dancing, juggling and snake-charming, performances on grand state occasions, and junglecraft and animal lore such as are exemplified by some of the hunting castes. Some of these minor arts have already had a certain amount of attention elsewhere in this chapter, so we shall select but three not heretofore specifically discussed, for brief description.

**Weaving.** Weaving of some sort is one of the oldest arts connected with civilization. It has been one of the well-known arts in early Indian history and one of the most widely practiced forms of manufacture in that country today. Indian cottons, such as madras cloth and calicoes, and her woolen cashmeres, and varied kinds of silk fabrics, often products of crude hand looms, for centuries have enjoyed a world market, and even today compete successfully in certain markets with the products of improved power looms. Many of these textiles are produced as village industries, in the homes, or in small factories; and the nationalistic movement of recent years has tended to extol the virtues of keeping up such *swadeshi* industries in preference to machine-made articles, especially if they are imported from foreign countries. With the reign of Akbar, rug-making copied after Persian patterns, and later styles Indian in design, became a prominent industry, and is so today. Fine needle and wax work, block-printing, and other similar forms of textile artistry,—and all usually done by men rather than women, have made India famous; and practically every tourist passing through that country purchases many such articles, either as works of art or for practical home use.

**Pottery-Making.** Pottery-making is another useful art that reaches back into antiquity. Archaeological investigations in India show<sup>19</sup> that pottery was made and used by the earliest people of which record can be found; and today it constitutes one of the most important village industries throughout the country.

Pottery-making in India, as to quality of texture, glazing, ornamentation, etc., probably never attained the artistic heights reached in ancient Egypt, Phoenicia, and other ancient countries of the Near East and Asia Minor; but the pottery-makers throughout the villages know well how to turn out articles that serve efficiently their practical purposes in daily life. Large globular-shaped vessels with flaring mouths are made for the transportation of water and other liquid substances, and for storing them in the

<sup>19</sup>India in 1930-31.



home or in the market. Some of these vessels of large proportions serve as containers of grain, flour, and other food supplies in the home. And the village, as a sort of cooperative enterprise, may construct for itself a huge granary by laying down in mud a large grass rope coiled in conical fashion, with the interior and the exterior carefully plastered over with a special mortar, and with a small opening at the top for entrance, covered with a trap door. The potter's art also includes the making of tile for the roofing of houses, and the creation of earthen images of the gods. At the bazaars, pottery suitable for various uses is displayed for sale, and at the open air shandys the potters bring forth their wares in varied profusion, for barter or for sale. What traveller, who has passed through this interesting land, has failed to purchase a neatly-wrought earthenware vessel or an image of the Buddha for his collection of curios?

**Juggling.** Among the various indigenous Indian arts having to do with entertainment is that of juggling. We might also add to this the two related arts, if such they may be called, of snake-charming and fortune-telling. The calling of the magic-man, in some form, must have extended far back into Indian civilization, but as to how far back, we have no available information. However, legend and story assure us of the presence of such entertainers far back in early Indian history. In western countries we find, especially during the middle ages, court jesters, and also strolling minstrels who gradually added to their singing and recitations the performance of sleight-of-hand tricks and dexterous feats of tossing balls, plates, knives, etc. If the history of our present-day grand opera, the movie, the vaudeville, and the circus, could be traced out in an interpretative way, it is probable that all would be found genetically related to the very humble efforts among early peoples toward entertaining themselves, or attempting to secure for themselves fellowship with invisible spirits or power over the invisible forces with which they thought they had to do, or attempting to escape a distasteful present reality. Such is probably the fundamental motive of the Indian juggler, the snake-charmer, and the astrologer, as they ply their vocations today, even if they do receive a few rupees or annas of "buckshish" by way of compensation. The gullibility of the ignorant masses, the animistic nature of their religions, a vivid power of imagination, and the force of custom, all combine to make the people of India receptive to the performances of this type of artist.

The traveller to India by the Mediterranean route, as soon as he reaches Port Said, will experience a quick introduction to the legerdemain and dexterous feats which make up the varied bags



FIG. XXII. WORK AND WOESENE, from an original painting by Jambhadrabhai Ganguly, a  
native artist. Courtesy of the PHANAM PRESS, CALCUTTA.





of tricks exhibited by the oriental magic man. A number of swimmers will exhibit their art by diving for coins thrown into the water by passengers from the deck of their ship, and sometimes swimmers will dive under the ship from one side to the other. A traveller relates, on one occasion, how an old man sitting in a diminutive dugout canoe and smoking a cigar would hold the lighted end in his mouth while diving overboard to retrieve a coin, and how, upon returning to his tiny boat, he would reverse his cigar and smoke away contentedly while awaiting the next coin! Children, and sometimes grown-ups, will gather on the wharf and perform remarkable feats of contortion or other gymnastics for the sake of a few coins thrown from the ship. This practice is also characteristic of Malayan countries and China. Sometimes entertainers may be allowed on deck, there to astonish the passengers with what appears to be the turning of a chicken into a snake, or the finding of day-old chickens or other objects in the inside coat pockets of some wide-eyed bystander. If a group of guests at a hotel in Bombay, or other city of any size, should foregather on the veranda for a time after a meal, a number of magic men, sometimes as many as half a dozen, are likely to appear to entertain the group with their art. Sometimes there seems to be a competition among them to determine who is the most dexterous performer as well as the most successful rupee-getter; and there is often numbered in their group a snake-charmer who, by the use of a simple flute, seems to wield an enchanting power over the basket of cobras he exhibits. It is said by doubters that the cobras have had their fangs pulled out, but often they have not. On numerous occasions I have inquired as to whether any one had seen a juggler throw a rope into the air for someone to climb, but no one had. Evidently this feat is a figment of the story teller's imagination and is the Hindu version of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Onlookers of the juggler's art seldom begrudge the few coins they hand over in recompense for performance of tricks that only a Houdini could understand or perform. Often when attending a mela or shandy, there will be in tents presided over by fortune-tellers, people who, by the reading of your palm, the shuffling of cards, or the throwing of dice, the reading of your horoscope, or gazing into a crystal, presume to tell you of both your past and your future. Those who have given this subject some attention have chanced upon the interesting theory that the gypsies of Europe and America came originally from Rajputana. The similarity of costumes give this more than a semblance of truth.

The general tendency of the population to account for natural phenomena that science can explain, as the mere juggling



of a sleight-of-hand performer, is often a hindrance to progress. For example, at one of the mission schools of agriculture is an improved herd of dairy cows, the best one of which gives about twenty-five quarts of milk daily. Since the average native village cow gives only a quart or two of milk daily, some villagers, even though they see this cow milked, are not inclined to believe their eyes, and account for this phenomenal production of milk as a juggler's trick such as pulling a white rabbit out of a hat. It is hard for them to understand that such milk production is due to careful breeding, selection, feeding, and general good treatment of dairy cows. Yet we of the West must not smile too broadly at this exhibition of gullibility and superstition, for patent medicines of questionable value yet find a ready market in our midst, and we note in our magazines and daily papers advertisements of Yogi who claim to have such an understanding of the stars, psychology, philosophy, and the laws of the universe generally, as to constitute a key to one's inner powers and a control over one's achievements. Many of these are said to have a large clientele.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Strangely enough, in spite of social groups in India, the music, the painting and even the religious ritual, are largely individualistic.

## Chapter XXIII

### THE MUSIC OF INDIA

by

MARY ROSENGRANT FOLEY

The Ramayana is one of the two great epics of India. Two of the characters are Rama, the hero, and Hanuman, the monkey-god. Legend tells us that Hanuman was exceedingly proud of his skill as a player on the *vina*. Rama, becoming exceedingly tired of Hanuman's boasting, decided one day to cure him. The seven notes of the octave were changed into beautiful nymphs who passed by Hanuman as he played. One of the nymphs died as she listened, for she represented the note that Hanuman had murdered. A sage then took up the *vina* and revived the nymph by playing the correct note. Needless to say, Hanuman never, thereafter, attempted to pose as a great musician.

A westerner, likewise, should have a humble reluctance about dealing with the subject of Indian music. This limited description is attempted with the thought that though it is impossible to translate adequately the music of India into the musical language of the West, yet it is possible to learn something of the soul of India from the emotional melodies of the southern Aryans.<sup>1</sup>

#### *In the Beginning*

Myth and legend give us a skeletonized story of the origin of Indian music. The three arts of drama, music, and dancing are spoken of as coming to India through the god, Siva, who, in one personification, is known as "The God of the Roaring Tempests."

The Vedas, the first of which was compiled about 1500 B. C., speak often of a variety of string, wind, and percussion instruments. The Rig-Veda, the earliest of the Hindu scriptures, was originally

<sup>1</sup>The reader wishing to pursue further the study of Indian music is referred to such standard works as the following: Fysee-Eahamin, Atiya Begum, *Music of India*, Luzac & Co., London, 1925; Popley, H. A., *Music of India*, Association Press, Calcutta, 1921; Fox-Strangways, A. H., *Music of Hindostan*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1914; Clements, E., *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1915; Coomaraswamy, Ananda, "Indian Music," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1917; Rao, H. P. Krishna, *Psychology of Music*, Bangalore, 1923.



recited in three tones—a practice which is still continued in some sections of India. The culture of vocal music had likewise gone considerably beyond primitive stages in the time of the Vedas. The Sama Veda was composed of chants and tunes to be used at priestly functions. For these chants there were strict and complicated rules. Musical similes are used in early literature; the humming of the bees is compared to stringed instruments, and thunder compared to drums.

Both in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, compiled between 500 B. C. and 200 A. D., we find frequent reference to music, with many indications that the art had proceeded with its development beyond that found in the Vedic period. It is quite probable that as early as 350 B. C. a system of notation had been worked out, with seven notes designated by initial letters. In Hindu mythology the seven principal notes were associated with the cries of animals and birds. Such a classification runs as follows:

Shadja (Sa)	—The cry of a peacock
Rishaba (Ri)	—The sound made by a cow calling her calf
Gandhara (Ga)	—The bleat of a goat
Madhyama (Ma)	—The cry of a heron
Panchama (Pa)	—The note of the cuckoo, or Indian Nightingale
Dhaivata (Dha)	—The neigh of a horse
Nishada (Ni)	—The trumpeting of an elephant

Thus, as one may well imagine, these notes or *surs* have interesting biographies, human and supernatural in composition. "They are human in having temperaments, costumes and colours; and like products of nature they flourish in particular seasons. They are descended from heavenly bodies and trace their lineage from above. Certain surs are dominant at certain stages of man's life, and are produced from various parts of the body. For example, the sur *Sa* is under the protection of *Agni Deva*, and like *Pa* does not lend itself to change into *tivral* (sharps) or *komal* (flats), but is permanent. It is connected with the first heaven and the first planet called *Kamar* (the moon). It is happy in temperament; in effect it is cold and moist, and its complexion is pink. It is arrayed in most beautiful white garments and lovely ornaments. Its seasons are the year around. Its notes are produced from the abdomen . . . . It is prevalent in the voice of the human being when he is seventy years old."<sup>2</sup>

The natural form of these notes is denoted as *prakrita* or *sud-*

<sup>2</sup>Fyzee-Ehsanin, Afiya Begum, *Music of India*, p. 37, Luzac & Co., London, 1925.

*dha*, and the chromatics are called *vikrita*. The chromatics may be *tivra* (sharp), *atitivra* (very sharp), *komal* (flat), or *atikomāl* (very flat). Sanskrit authorities sometimes divide the notes into castes, and also allocate the following colors to them respectively as they are given above: black, tawny, golden, white, yellow, purple, and green. Furthermore, as shown above, owing to variations in the folklore throughout the country, authorities do not always agree upon the characteristics imputed to the surs and ragas.

### *The Raga*

The *Raga* is the Indian substitute for the western scale. It represents an arrangement of sounds. Our closest understanding of its meaning is that of "melody mode," for it is made up of a certain succession of notes within an octave and it is linked with a particular sentiment or emotion. The ragas are the basic structure in Hindu melody. It should be noted that "Indian music" is practically synonymous with Hindu music. For, though Persian and Arabian modes of music were the fashion under the Mogul emperors, they never became a part of Indian music, in spite of the fact that they became domiciled in India.

In the earliest of Indian music each raga had three important notes: the *graha*, or starting note, the *amsa*, or predominant note, and the *nyasa*, or final note. Importance today is given solely to the *amsa*, which is often called the soul of the raga.

Because the ragas have been derived largely from tribal songs, poetic productions, songs of devotion and early scientific compositions, there is a wide diversity of classifications, particularly when the northern (Hindustani) and the southern (Carnatic) systems are compared. In the Hindustani system the ragas are divided into six male, or principal ragas, each one of which has five or six wives, or *raginis* (secondary ragas), as well as eight sons, or *putras* (derivative ragas). The Carnatic system works out seventy-two ragas derived from variations of the seven notes.

The Hindu year is divided into six *ritus*, or seasons, each of which is composed of two months. Beginning with autumn they continue with Indian names representing frost, dew, spring, heat, and rain. The Hindus assigned a primary raga to each season. The laws insisting (musically speaking, of course) that the appropriate raga must be played in the season to which it is assigned, are still carefully observed, as noted more fully later. It would be considered a serious offense for a musician to play a raga out of its proper position in relation to the calendar. This also applies in large measure to the playing of ragas in relation to the hours of day and night. Thus: "A *Bihag* is full of sweet meanings and appealing



sentiments when sung at night; in the morning it is entirely discordant and loses its beauty. Similarly an *Asa-ori* sung in the early hours of the day stirs the depths of your higher thoughts; at night it loses its charm and falls flat."<sup>3</sup>

The twenty-four hours of the day are usually divided as follows:

First period	— 6:00 - 8:30 A.M.
Second period	— 8:30 - 11:00 A.M.
Third period	— 11:00 - 1:30 P.M.
Fourth period	— 1:30 - 4:00 P.M.
Fifth period	— 4:00 - 6:00 P.M.
Sixth period	— 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.
Seventh period	— 9:00 - 1:00 A.M.
Eighth period	— 1:00 - 3:00 A.M.
Ninth period	— 3:00 - 6:00 A.M.

It is to be observed that different ragas are also connected with the elements, as well as with the times of day and season of the year. About this fact imaginative legends have been grouped. As an example: At one time, Akbar, the great Mogul emperor, knowing that the raga *Dipak* was associated with fire, commanded a noted singer, Naik Gopal, to sing the raga. The singer tried to evade the command; but, at the insistence of Akbar, stood in the Jumna River and sang. His precaution was altogether in vain for fire burst from his body and he was destroyed.

### *Ragas and Raginis in Western Notation*

It is even more difficult to translate ragas and raginis into western scales than it is to translate the literature of one country into the language of another. Yet in order to stimulate an understanding and appreciation of Indian music, it is necessary to make the attempt. Vaman Shirodker, for a number of years, was a favorite student of the famous Indian poet and musician, Rabindranath Tagore, spending some eight years at the poet's International University, Visva Bharati, at Santiniketan in Bengal. Vaman Babu, with his lovely, modulated baritone voice, sang the ragas and raginis of India, playing an accompaniment on his *vina* (pronounced *veena*). As he sang I put the melody down in western notation, then played the notes over on a piano. Vaman Babu, again played and sang the notes while I listened to be sure of the accuracy of my interpretation. These are illustrated below.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 78.

Certain ragas and raginis are closely linked with aspects of nature. The *Goud Malhar* raga is supposed to be sung at the beginning of the rainy season (monsoon)—around the fifteenth of June—as the clouds are gathering for the first downpour.

*Goud Malhar*



A ragini, called *Sharanga*, is played at midday, and is used by poets and musicians to express the heat at noon. The mood represented is illustrated by a poem of Kalidas. A deer of the forest, overcome by the midday heat, started running after the shimmering heat rays of the sun as they were thrown back from the earth, thinking the rays to be pools of water. The poem concludes with the deer following the waves beyond the horizon, possibly indicating the passing of consciousness from activity to somnolence, easily recognized by anyone who has lived through an Indian summer on the plains.

*Sharanga*



A melody called *Bahar* is used only in the Spring, and is sung in that season at midnight.

*Bahar*



The theme, *Bageshri*, is very popular among Hindustani artists but is seldom used by Bengalis. It is sung at nine o'clock at night.

*Bageshri*





One of the favorite raginis of India is called *Bhai Rabi*. As a prayer for women it is sung at dawn.



The oldest known theme in India is called *Bupali*. The melody forms the basis of the tune for a Vedic hymn. The theme has also been discovered in ancient Greek music. It is sung at the lighting of the little clay lights in the evening, just at sunset.



The lights are lit by married women or by girls who are called *devi* (goddesses). The devadasis, or sacred dancing girls, were, for a long period, the keepers of much of Indian music. They were married to the gods, were taught dancing by the Brahmin priests, participated in religious ceremonies, and gave professional performances in the homes of wealthy patrons. This class is rapidly passing from view in modern India owing to obvious immoralities that crept into the system. Music is moving back into the hands of other trained musicians.

### *The Tala*

*Tala*, or time, is to foreign observers of Indian music one of the most peculiar and confusing features. At the same time one discovers very soon that it is exceedingly important. It goes in a kind of rhythm instead of following equal time divisions as in western music. It may be composed of different numbers of beats, the principal one of which is called the *som*. Two, three, or more notes may be included in these beats. This does not alter the time but makes it more difficult. The important point is to come back to the *som* in the right time.

The use of grace notes relieves what might otherwise tend to monotony in Indian music. It is commonly said that a melody without variations or embellishments is like a night without a moon, a brook without water, or a vine without flowers.

*Musical Instruments*

**Drums.** Various kinds of drums are used to beat time in the melody. They also add variety by a sort of cross meter. After careful examination the manipulation of the drums is seen to be a great art in itself. A musician of skill can produce on the drum unexpected and enticing rhythms. What has been said of the drums may also be said of the cymbals, which often accompany village vocal or instrumental music.

**Vina.** The vina is regarded as the national instrument of India. It is easily the finest among the stringed instruments. A large bowl at the lower end is hollowed out of a piece of wood. On the bowl is a bridge and several sounding holes. Near the upper end of the instrument is a large gourd hollowed out. The neck of the vina curves over the gourd as the instrument is held upright to be played. The finger board is approximately two feet long and may have upon it as many as twenty-four frets. The frets are stopped with the left hand. The strings are of steel and brass and are played with the first two and last fingers of the right hand.

**Sitar.** This instrument usually has seven strings, five of steel and two of brass. It is similar to the vina, but is more easily carried since it has no attached gourd.

**Jaltarang.** This is a collection of different-sized china bowls each containing a varying quantity of water. The bowls are played upon with short sticks.

**Saraj.** This is another stringed instrument with four main metal strings and a large number of sympathetic under-strings.

**Punji, or Tombi.** This instrument is one seen almost without exception by every tourist. It is a small gourd in which two cane pipes are inserted. It is used always by snake charmers and seems to have a particular command over such snakes as the cobra.

**Murali, or Bansri.** This instrument, the flute, is made of bamboo and is associated with the god Krishna. It is said that wild beasts and snakes listened entranced to Krishna's playing of the flute. Krishna's flute has a place in Indian history similar to that of the pipes of Pan in the West, and the lyre of Orpheus in the Graeco-Roman world.

**Nosbug, or Sruti Upanga.** This instrument is commonly known in English as the "Indian bagpipe." It is made of kid, has two cane mouthpieces, one for the bag and one for the drone.



*Indian and Western Music Contrasted*

Anyone who tries to appreciate the spirit of Indian music must remember that melody is the dominant factor, as harmony is in the music of the West. While the West has given the world a rich development of harmony, the East has travelled the path of melody and has discovered beauty and charm therein.

In Indian music the melody is dependent upon certain fixed notes, while in western music the notes are accented by the mood of the harmony at the moment and find special value in combinations rather than in individual note-separation.

The absence of fixed regularity in the scale and the use of microtones with entirely different intervals, produce in Indian music a peculiarly minor effect, especially for people accustomed to fixed intervals in music.

Indian music has, in the past, laid little stress on timbre or quality of tone. Attention has been paid especially to the accuracy and skill of execution of the musician. The Indian singer is first a musician and then a voice-producer. For those expecting perfection of tone and quality, any imperfection in this regard is quite apt to spoil an Indian composition. However, Indian musicians are realizing the importance of tone and are emphasizing it. The musician with whom the writer studied has a splendid command of the tonal qualities of his voice. No hearer could doubt but that there is a charm in Indian music well worth appreciating.

It is as hard for an Indian to grasp western music as it is for a westerner to understand and appreciate Indian music. While to the westerner, Indian music sounds tedious and weird, at the same time the Indian thinks western music, with its extreme multiplicity of sounds, noisy and confusing.

Probably Indian audiences in attendance on musical performances are the most deeply emotional in the world. Their major interest is in the song rather than in the singer. There seems to be a bond of sympathy established between performer and audience, thus making it evident that the art of the listener practically equals the skill of the musician.

The relation of religion to Indian music may be illustrated by the suggestion that according to Indian *pundits* musicians must possess a devotion to God and must be pure in body and mind, for if they do not understand the spiritual power of music they will find it impossible to discover the science underlying their art.

The possibility of combining the music of India and the West is of increasing interest to musicians in both parts of the world. Occasionally one meets those who feel that the blending is impossible.

but the value to be secured from such an achievement makes it worth attempting. The work in this field that is being done at the center at Santiniketan, under the guidance of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, is notable and worthy of extensive emulation at other centers both in India and in the West.

A link between Indian and European music is to be found in the songs of the gypsies. Magyar melodies, with a microtone intonation, and a peculiar rhythmic accent, resemble Indian ragas and raginis. It is regarded by some as a fairly well established fact that the western gypsies are an Indian tribe which left Rajputana at an unknown date.

There yet remain many important Sanskrit and vernacular treatises on Indian music that have not been translated into western languages. Until that translation is accomplished the full value of Indian music cannot be spread broadcast in the West.

The more one studies the art and music of India, the more one is driven to the conclusion that the soul of that country is very well revealed by the musicians and artists. It is possible likewise to see the depth of meaning in the famous statement, "Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." Truly the culture of India can be found in the music of that fascinating land.

### *What the People Sing\**

In order to give our readers some idea of the poetical and lyrical content of current Indian music, we present here a few examples of devotional hymns, folk songs, and love songs.

1) **Devotional Hymns.** The Hindus, from early ages down to the present, have found music a facile and appropriate means of expressing their religious devotion and aspiration. A few examples of their devotional hymns are presented here:

#### RAGHUNAYAKA<sup>5</sup>

I am at thy feet, Raghunayaka,

For they are like the lotus,

Thou drivest away my illusion, through thy protection.

For thou art the Savior.

\*The following interesting sidelights may be noted in Indian music:

(a) Very often music was signed by the composers introducing their names into the close of their compositions, for Indian musicians compose their own texts.

(b) The arts of music and poetry are not close together in the Indian languages. This fact is especially noticeable in poems of religious rapture and in love lyrics that mix religion with human passion.

<sup>5</sup>These are devotional hymns produced by the most famous composer of the last two centuries, Tyagaraja, and are translated into English for use here by Dr. Walter Brooks Foley. Tyagaraja's hymns have been compared with the Psalms of David, and the Imitation of Christ, by Thomas à Kempis. His hymns are considered the last word in the theory and practice of Indian devotion and spiritual self-culture.



## SPOTLIGHTS ON THE CULTURE OF INDIA

When I was exhausted, trying to cross the sea of births and deaths

Thou didst protect me,

O Lord of Sita, Protector of my everlasting joy.

PATTI VIDUVARADU<sup>3</sup>

Having taken hold of my hand

Thou shouldst not leave me!

From the day of my birth thou hast made me thy devotee;

Thou hast protected my life and my honor from all harm!

Thou hast taught me the things that are permanent and the things that are transitory;

Thou hast shown me what to do and what not to do!

Thou hast proven thyself as the only one without earthly attachment;

Thou shouldst not let go of thy devotee's hand!

TO INDRA, THE SUPREME GOD<sup>4</sup>

He, who fixed the staggering earth,  
Shaped the mountains at their birth,  
Sky's blue vault held up and bent,  
Measured out the firmament,  
He is,—listen to my verse,  
Indra, Lord of Universe!

Seven bright rays bedeck his bow,  
Seven great rivers from him flow;  
Thunder-armed, quick to ire,  
He, in vengeance swift and dire,  
Laid the proud Rauhina low,  
Heaven-aspiring impious foe!

Mighty Indra, strong and true,  
Hymns to thee and gifts are due,  
And our priests libations pour  
For thy blessings' endless store,  
Speak to us,—for thou art near,  
Let our brave sons know no fear!

<sup>3</sup>These two hymns are found in the Rig Veda (1300 B. C.) and were translated by Romesh Dutt, in an *Anthology of World Poetry*, pp. 52, 54, 56. Reproduced here by permission of the publishers, The Literary Guild of America.

PUSHAN, GOD OF PASTURE<sup>6</sup>

Where the grass is rich and green,  
 And the pastures beauteous seen,  
 And the meadows soft and sweet,  
 Lead us, safe from scorching heat,  
 Blessings on thy servants pour,  
 And we follow evermore!

Fill our hearts with hope and courage,  
 Fill our homes with food and forage,  
 Save us from a cruel fate  
 Feed us and invigorate;  
 We are suppliants at thy door,  
 And we follow evermore!

Heart and voice we lift in praise,  
 Chant our hymns and pious lays,  
 From the Bright One, good and gracious,  
 Ask for food and pasture spacious;  
 Shepherds' God! Befriend the poor,  
 And we follow evermore!

GAYATRI<sup>7</sup>

To the excellent glory  
 Of the Quickening Sun  
 We would attain;  
 That He may stimulate  
 Our devotions.

LIGHT<sup>8</sup>

Lead me  
     from the false  
     to the true,

Lead me  
     from the night  
     to the light,

Lead me  
     from all death  
     to God's life.

<sup>6</sup>These Rig Vedic and Upanishad prayers are used as poetical songs even today.



2) **Folk Songs.** Indians, particularly the Hindus, have a rich folk lore which in the *kala-tchebums* of the south, the *guyan sab-bhas* and other forms of presentation, reveal the fertile imagination, the sense of humor, the pathos, and the historical backgrounds of the people. The following examples are submitted:

#### FOLK MELODIES<sup>\*</sup>

##### A Bird Came

A bird I knew not came to my cottage  
From a land I did not know;  
I had no power to bind its wings,  
Now it is gone, I fear, forever.

##### Where is Peace?

A bird from a strange country  
Has appeared in my courtyard;  
If I could but hold it  
My longing heart would be at peace.

##### Devotion

I have waited all the night  
That I might worship the Eastern Radiance  
That I might bathe in the sacred river;  
The sun has risen over the Ganges:  
Mother of rivers, bless me.

##### Heat

The bulbul drowns in the neem tree,  
The coppersmith drums in the shimmering heat;  
Only last night the jasmine was fragrant in the dew,  
Now the silk-cotton's leaves are drooping.

##### Awake at Dawn

Usas, the dawn maiden, opened my eye-lids;  
The wind was soft in the morning,  
Sleep fled away in the rustle of palm leaves.

##### Still Moonlight

The moon whitens the thatch,  
The walls of the cottage are silver,  
No stir is in the village,  
The pariah dogs are asleep.

<sup>\*</sup>These melodies were composed and presented by Dr. Walter Brooks Foley.

**Before Dawn**

Mists rise from the hollows;  
 Even though the cart-wheels shriek in the stillness  
 The bullock driver is asleep,  
 Lulled by the padding of hoofs in the thick dust.

**Fear**

A cheel\* is in my garden:  
 (All the birds are afraid)  
 He swoops and the others fly away,  
 He is gone, and they come.  
 (Do men, too, have fears like the birds?)

\**Hawk*

**A prayer for Crops**

The Light of the East floods the rice fields,  
 The rains have just fallen,  
 We are ready to transplant the paddy.  
 O, Surjal Bring us good harvests!

**SUTTEE<sup>9</sup>**

Lamp of my Life, the lips of Death  
 Hath blown thee out with their sudden breath;  
 Naught shall revive thy vanished spark . . .  
 Love, must I dwell in the living dark?

Tree of my Life, Death's cruel foot  
 Hath crushed thee down to hidden root;  
 Nought shall restore thy glory fled . . .  
 Shall the blossom live when the tree is dead?

Life of my life, Death's bitter sword  
 Hath severed us like a broken word,  
 Rent us in twain who are but one. . . .  
 Shall the flesh survive when the soul is gone?

3) **Love Songs.** While the patterns of love-making in India, traditionally, have been quite different from those of many countries of the West, romantic love does abound there and finds its expression in song. Many Indian love songs are centuries old, and often represent the woman seeking the man. Among the Marathas, love songs recount the warlike experiences of that aggressive race. As

<sup>9</sup>Words by Sarojini Naidu, India's leading contemporary poetess, and taken from *The Golden Threshold*, p. 46, by permission of the publisher, William Heinemann, Ltd., London. This song might well be classified also as a love song.



in the West, the spring season in India is associated with love-making.

The following examples of love songs reveal not only the tender sentiment of romance between two lovers, but also something of domestic difficulties in the paternal house of the groom, and the tribal and communal hatreds that romantic love is sometimes forced to encounter:

PADAKALPATARU<sup>10</sup>

Only a Lover can understand  
The beat of the Loved one's heart.  
For me the charms of the world depart:  
I lie in my Love's one hand.  
Over the household work I start,  
And ever my soul is making moan,  
And none can prevent it. On my life,  
Among the folk, or here alone,  
I feel like a tinker's wife.\*

In the house the elderly people heap  
Abuse on my head all day:  
Bitter as death are the things they say  
From morning till time to sleep.  
And my Beloved it is always  
That maketh them do such bane.  
There is no soul to take my part;  
None knoweth the aching of my heart;  
To whom should I then complain?

Chandidas saith: 'The happy way  
Is boldly all your love to say.'

\* (*A thief's wife, in the original*)

AN INDIAN LOVE SONG<sup>11</sup>

He:

Lift up the veils that darken the delicate moon of thy glory and  
grace,  
Withhold not, O Love, from the night of my longing the joy of  
thy luminous face,  
Give me a spear of the scented *keora* guarding thy pinioned curls,  
Or a silken thread from the fringes that trouble the dream of thy  
glimmering pearls;

<sup>10</sup>Padakalpataru, Vol. 1, p. 125, by E. C. Roy, the Vangiya Sahitya Parishat, the English by J. A. Chapman in Vaisnavya Lyrics, p. 10, and presented here through permission of the author and the publishers, the Oxford University Press.

<sup>11</sup>Words by Sarojini Naidu, from the Bird of Time, p. 15, and presented by permission of the publisher, William Heinemann, Ltd, London.



FIG. XXIV. LEADERSHIP IS HEALTH WORK. The Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranjpet, Dr. Galen F. Scudder, Surgeon-in-Chief. The completion of this excellent structure was laid December 13, 1919, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the arrival in India of Dr. John Scudder at a medical missionary. Inset, Dr. Ida Scudder's travelling roadside dispensary, radiating from her medical center at Bellary.





Faint grows my soul with thy tresses' perfume and the song of thy  
anklets' caprice,  
Revive me, I pray, with the magical nectar that dwells in the  
flower of thy kiss.

She:

How shall I yield to the voice of thy pleading, how shall I grant  
thy prayer,  
Or give thee a rose-red silken tassel, a scented leaf from my hair?  
Or fling in the flame of thy heart's desire the veils that cover my  
face,  
Profane the law of my father's creed for a foe of my father's race?  
Thy kinsmen have broken our sacred altars and slaughtered our  
sacred kine.  
The feud of old faiths and the blood of old battles sever thy  
people and mine.

He:

What are the sins of my race, Beloved, what are my people to thee?  
And what are thy shrine, and kine and kindred, what are thy gods  
to me?  
Love recks not of feuds and bitter follies, of stranger, comrade  
or kin,  
Alike in his ear sound the temple bells and the cry of the muezzin.  
For love shall cancel the ancient wrong and conquer the ancient  
rage,  
Redeem with his tears the memoried sorrow that sullied a bygone  
age.





PART V  
CONCLUSION





## Chapter XXIV

### CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND EMERGENT LEADERSHIP IN INDIA

by

WALTER BROOKS FOLEY

There is a fundamental unity in many of the stimulating movements that have been stirring India. Some of these movements have been noted in previous chapters, particularly the chapter dealing with Hinduism and Its Offshoots. But within the past fifty years many reform movements have emerged with persistent vigor. It is obvious to intelligent observers that the calm serenity of accepted or endured custom has been disturbed, and that waves of social reform that started in other countries are now washing over the shores of India. It is noticeable also that ripples of increasing intensity are spreading from local personalities within India itself. This unity of ground-swell is a part of the concerted effort of many social elements that we find in this southern Asiatic country passing in review. The present chapter, therefore, attempts to describe and, in part, to evaluate from a national and international viewpoint, a few of the efforts toward social reform in contemporary India and the emergent leadership connected therewith.

#### *Movements Toward Social and Political Reform*

**The Social Emergence of Depressed Classes.** The power of the movements that are breaking into fragments ancient solid walls can be illustrated in innumerable ways. One incident that came under the writer's attention will serve as a pertinent example. A conference of Hindus was meeting in Calcutta,<sup>1</sup> and the writer attended on the invitation of a Hindu friend. The topics for discussion were mainly along lines of social welfare. Soon after the opening of the conference a resolution was introduced before the group composed of representatives of the various castes. This resolution

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 523-529, *Zion's Herald*, Boston, Mass., April 23, 1926.



seemed to cause consternation to the president of the conference, who was a Brahmin pundit from Benares. He refused to act longer as the presiding officer. The resolution called for initiating the lower caste members of the conference as Brahmins! The writer actually saw a hundred members of lower castes initiated as Brahmins. A large sum was raised to carry the movement out to the villages. The Hindu friend stated that social reform had been advanced by at least thirty years. We separated, to meet a few weeks later. My first question was, "What has happened to the movement?" "Oh," was the reply, "the lower castes, when approached in the villages, said, 'Why should we be initiated as Brahmins? We are just as good as the Brahmins.'"

This incident is not isolated. It was clearly shown at the Round Table Conference that the depressed classes are not only socially and politically conscious of their condition and their rights, but have able and cultured leaders out of their own ranks who can present their case forcefully. These and other incidents manifest a most significant turn toward the advancement of better social relations among the great caste groups of Indians, and especially do they show that this movement is from the bottom of society upward as well as from the top downward. This movement is following the course of history and illustrates the fact that freedom must be grasped as well as granted.

**The Swaraj Movement.** One of the most important examples of Indian political activity in recent years is that connected with the swarajist, or self-government movement promoted by the Indian National Congress. In previous chapters reference has been made to this movement as an organized effort for the attainment of political autonomy. However, to the Indian philosopher, swaraj has a deeper meaning than mere political freedom; it also signifies self-discipline on the part of individuals, and the integration of the political, the spiritual, and the social self. Thus Natarajan writes: "Swaraj is a classic word whose connotation is neither exclusively nor even primarily political. It has its roots deep down in the Indian philosophical concept of the self of man as not distinct from the Self of the Universe . . . . Swaraj is thus spiritual as well as or even more than political self-rule. It means political self-rule founded on personal self-rule . . . . Swaraj, as we understand it, has nothing to do with remaining within or going out of the British connection. If the British connection is conducive to the growth of India's personality, it is inconceivable that India can, even if she wished, get out of it. If it is not, it is equally inconceivable that it can endure as an obstacle to national growth."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Indian Social Reformer, Bombay, Dec. 29, 1934, p. 276.

But lack of space, and the recency of the more striking phases of the movement already known to students of current world events, preclude an extended excursion into the historical development of swaraj; so we shall only attempt to touch a few of the high points of the movement in order to show its place in the panorama of movements and conditions entering into present-day Indian culture. Even though the swaraj movement, in its more dramatic national aspects as affecting British rule, is fairly recent in appearance, the student of Indian history can readily discern a number of events and conditions in past times that throw light upon it. For example, it is a historical fact that for a great deal of the recorded history of India there has been no close-knit, independent government including the whole of that great sub-continent. Even Akbar the Great did not conquer a number of the Deccan chiefs in South India. And in a former chapter was recorded the fact that at the end of Harsha's rule, 648 A. D., the last strong government including central and northern India passed, to be followed for a number of centuries by a great deal of intrigue and internal strife among the minor chieftains. During this period, a similar condition existed among the warring Dravidian chieftains of the South; so for this period, there was no semblance of political unity in the country as a whole. Eventually, such internal weakness invited numerous invasions from Mohammedan countries to the northwest. As previously stated, one of the more important of these invasions, was in 1398, led by Tamerlane (Timur), a Mogul emperor, said to have been a descendant of the mighty Genghis Khan. In 1525, Babur, King of Kabul, occupied Delhi, Agra, and other key cities of the north, and through a number of brilliant military campaigns began the subduing of Hindu India and the establishment of the famous Mogul Dynasty. Aurangzeb, the last important member of this dynasty, passed away in 1707 to be followed by a number of weaker successors, under whose reigns this great empire rapidly declined. During the latter period there occurred considerable rivalry among European countries for control of trade rights, and this period also saw such internal military conflicts as the three Marharatta Wars, the Gurkha War, two Burmese Wars, two Sikh uprisings, the first Afghan War, and other conflicts of less note. The Mutiny of 1857 was, perhaps, a normal outgrowth of these conditions, and became an important turning point in the history of India. The Mutiny thus not only marked the end of the reign of the Moguls, but the taking over of the rule of India by the British Crown. From here on, the destiny of India has been that of a member of the British Empire, and from that time down to the present, there has been, perhaps, a continuity and a responsibility in gov-



ernment that India has not enjoyed since the days of Aurangzeb.<sup>2</sup> But however that may be, we should recall that even today though all India, with the exception of Pondicherry and a few other small areas, is subject to British authority, that country is fragmented politically into some 562 independent states and a number of other provinces and magistracies comprising British India. These constitute separate political entities largely because of ethnical, cultural, and military reasons; and such cohesion as exists at the center is due largely to the British Raj.

Even though these various social elements comprising present-day India possess a certain cultural homogeneity, and even if traditionally the people have been lovers of peace, India has experienced a great deal of strife, so that it is to be expected that such a population would be restive under the impacts of modern life, both from within and outside the country. But beside the larger cultural factors and historical episodes that have a bearing upon swaraj, as we see it today, there are a number of more recent events that have influenced the movement in various ways. For the sake of our own convenience we shall mention only the more recent of these happenings.

According to the observations of a number of students of Indian affairs, several occurrences in modern times, through the widening of intellectual horizons and through the power of suggestion, have added to current political unrest in India. These include: (1) the education of young Indian men and women in both Indian and western universities, (2) the disinclination of the Union of South Africa, Australia, and other important dominions of the British Empire to permit immigration from India, (3) the defeat of Russia by Japan, (4) the experience of Indian soldiers in the World War, (5) economic misunderstandings between England and India, (6) the South African War, (7) the anger of petty chiefs deprived of their rules, (8) the subordination of Brahmins to the authority of ordinary criminal law, and others.<sup>4</sup> These historical movements and occurrences are making an appeal to an increasing number of Indian intellectuals to demand self-government at the earliest possible time; and, contrary to the belief of some people, ultimate swaraj for India is looked upon favorably by many, perhaps most, British people, officially connected with Indian affairs. In this connection, it should be recalled that it has been the general policy of British rule to extend to important dominions a large degree of political autonomy. Thus Canada, Australia, and the Union of South Africa enjoy almost absolute auton-

<sup>2</sup>See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Ed., Vol. 12, p. 187; also see Cumming, Sir John, *Modern India*, Chs. 1, 2, and 3, Oxford Univ. Press, 1932.

<sup>4</sup>*India in 1930-31*, Ch. 1. Authorities differ somewhat as to the relative importance of these factors, but it is likely that the first five are the more significant.

omy in government, and it is said that the same freedom is in store for India, as soon as and to the extent that the country can demonstrate her readiness for such freedom and her ability to defend herself against invasion. Because of the social backwardness of the people and the traditional lack of unity in the ethnical and cultural composition of the population, it will probably be a long road, at best, to full dominion status or virtual independence.

The Constitution of 1919 provided definitely for a greater participation of Indians in their own government, and anticipating future developments, also provided that at the end of ten years there should be an official review of the progress of government, looking forward to the possibility of further change. Thus in 1928 Sir John Simon, as chairman, led a Parliamentary Commission to investigate the progress of affairs in India and to report the same to Parliament. Though this Commission met a hostile reception on the part of Indian swarajists, because the Commission, being a Parliamentary Commission, contained no Indian members, it proceeded ultimately to make the investigation, and presented a voluminous report (1930) which was considered by both Parliament and the Round Table conferences.<sup>3</sup>

The work of the First Round Table Conference in London, and to a less extent the two subsequent similar conferences, proceeded under great handicaps imposed by a number of factors connected with both the British conservative attitude and the swarajist movement. Probably the most urgent and serious difficulty was to get an adequate representation of Indians to attend these conferences. The swarajists not only refused to send delegates to the First Conference, but began an organized campaign of civil disobedience, which was not a new procedure of the Congress supporters. This consisted of the picketing of cloth and liquor shops, the boycotting of British goods, the refusal to pay taxes and land-revenues, and other forms of passive disobedience with the conscious purpose of paralyzing government and embarrassing the Round Table Conferences. Such tactics were regarded by many observers as obstructive, even childish, and as evidence that India was not yet ready for complete self-government; others saw in such behavior a novel technique, through non-violent means (*Ahimsa*), of attempting to secure political independence. However, this campaign of civil disobedience occasionally got beyond the bounds of peaceful non-cooperation so that riots ensued and law and order were challenged. With considerable intensity in certain provinces, this led to a semi-militaristic rule by Viceroyal edict and

<sup>3</sup>For a very good review of these and other events associated with the Round Table conferences, see India in 1930-31, Ch. 2. See also the report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. II—Recommendations, His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1930; and Cumming, Sir John, *Political India 1882-1932*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1932.



proclamation. As a result, thousands of non-conforming swarajist leaders and their followers were sent to jail. But the swarajists at last modified their original attitude toward the London Round Table Conferences. Later Mr. Gandhi, as sole official delegate of the Congress Party, accompanied by a retinue of other swarajist leaders, attended the Second Round Table Conference (1931) and participated in its discussions. Though these conferences did not accomplish all that some had hoped, they served to clarify the issues at stake, and as the result of the Third, to formulate a scheme of constitutional reform. Thus the way was paved for the All-India Government Act of 1935, providing a unitary Central Government consisting of the Free States and British India, and assuring the protection of minorities. Obviously, only the working out of this Act will reveal whether or not real progress has been made.<sup>6</sup> Recently the swarajists turned aside somewhat from their campaign of obstruction and non-cooperation, to participation in government and the election of the largest block of representatives to the Central Assembly.

In the light of all that has transpired thus far, a disinterested observer may conclude: First, regardless of the extremists on the opposing sides of the question, it is obvious, that the British Government proposes to award India an increasing degree of participation in government, until some form of autonomy within the British community of nations is attained.<sup>7</sup> Second, before a full degree of efficient political autonomy can be enjoyed by India as a whole, a number of important internal questions must be solved, some of these by the nationals alone. These, as shown by recent sessions of the National Congress Party and the discussions of the London Round Table Conferences, include the following: (1) the unification of cultures throughout the realm so as to overcome measurably the great diversity of languages; (2) the reduction of the extremely high percentage of illiteracy; (3) the abolition of the numerous religious conflicts (mostly urban); (4) the securing of representation of minority groups in the central and the provincial legislative assemblies; (5) the working out of suitable participational relationships in the Central Government between what is now British India on the one hand, and the Indian States on the other; (6) the provision of suitable guarantees for the protection of property in India owned by foreigners; (7) the removing of certain political, social, and economic handicaps imposed by caste rule; (8) the securing of a more adequate education and enrichment of the

<sup>6</sup>For a rather complete account of these stirring events, see *India in 1930-31*, Ch. 2; also *Cunningham, Sir John*, op. cit., in entirety.

<sup>7</sup>As in proposals for provincial autonomy, all-India federation and responsibility with safeguards, see address of Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, before the House of Commons on December 10, 1934, *Indian Information Series No. 74*, British Library of Information, N. Y.

lives of women; (9) an assessment of the rightful place of modern industry in relation to the rural backgrounds in which approximately eighty to ninety per cent of the people live; (10) the working out of a suitable internal organization of the social order so as to provide adequately for the functions of government usual to a free society; (11) the development of an adequate power to cope with external military aggression; and (12) the development of a better system of land tenure.

The Round Table Conferences in London showed that the swaraj leaders had not properly anticipated all of these problems, nor have they yet formulated acceptable solutions to some of them. But those friends of Indian government and society who stand on the side lines and dispassionately study the development can distinguish an unmistakable progress in dealing with these problems, though progress often seems to go forward haltingly, in the face of indecision and opposition. For example, even though the conflicting communal groups could not mutually agree upon their representation in the provincial assemblies, the British Government, in August, 1932, provisionally made an award for such representation, and the Act of 1935 gave it tangible form. Thus, besides meeting in a practical way an *impasse* among the contending groups, this award and the Act of 1935 have furnished a laboratory for testing the theories and methods involved. It is the writer's opinion that the more responsible Indian leaders and the more thoughtful of the British officials in India are not very far apart in their viewpoints. Each group understands and respects the other to a far greater extent than many are willing to acknowledge. Thus the reader is perhaps ready to conclude that the lack of full enjoyment of political autonomy on the part of India is due far more to the backward conditions of the country and age-old social problems, than to mere contrariness on the part of opposing leaders. When Mr. Gandhi turned his attention to the problem of the removal of untouchability among the depressed classes and to village improvement, it would seem that he was recognizing in a practical way some of the major handicaps of political autonomy and social advance in India today. These and other developments in recent months seem to show that the swaraj leaders and their British friends are willing to exercise considerable patience and cooperation to the desired end of establishing in India an efficient and peaceful social order. And in the opinion of many thoughtful observers, the social order that is on the way in India will be a compound of the ancient ideals of Indian culture and the principles of free democratic government, of, for, and by a free people.

**The Women's Movement.** Among the more significant current efforts of the underprivileged classes toward social and politi-



cal equality with the traditionally more favored classes, is that of the so-called women's movement. From time immemorial Indian women have had great influence within the family circle, and now and again we find the name of an Indian woman who has attained national notice in the life of the country. But only in recent years has the movement for equal, or superior rights for women come into full view.<sup>6</sup>

The movement finds its fullest opportunity for public utterance at the sessions of the All-India Women's Conference held in some Indian city each year. The twenty-fourth of November, 1934, was celebrated in the principal cities as All-India Women's Day, when meetings were held and resolutions passed. One resolution called for: "The immediate appointment by the government of . . . a commission . . . with an adequate number of women on its personnel to consider ways and means for the early removal of the legal disabilities of women as regards inheritance, marriage, and guardianship of children . . ." These conferences have also rigorously supported the Sarda Act, the abolition of purdah and polygamy, and have demanded better educational opportunities for women, and other beneficent reforms. It is obvious that these conferences are not content with mere talk, since active participation in politics is implied in all their organized effort.

So important has the women's movement become that state documents such as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1919) and the Report of the Simon Commission (1930) have made specific mention of it. The latter, in discussing the women of India says: "The women's movement in India holds the key to progress and the results it may achieve are incalculably great. It is not too much to say that India cannot reach the position to which it aspires in the world until its women play their due part as educated citizens."<sup>7</sup>

This movement has been aided by Christian missionaries, numerous "square pegs" or independent thinkers who dared to break with custom, and by the women's movement in other contemporary countries such as in Turkey and countries of the West. But much of the real power of this movement has been generated within the ranks of the women of India, and has had able championship in the personages of such women as Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, Lady Abala Bose, Saroj Nalini Dutt, Pandita Ramabai, Mrs. Ranade, Mrs. Hansa Mehta, Mrs. Subha Tayan, The Begum Shah Nawaz,

<sup>6</sup>For a rather full account of the current women's movement in India, see such references as Das, Mrs. Sarangadhar, *Purdah*; *Ibid.*, *A Marriage to India*; and Woodsmall, Ruth F., *Women's Interests and Activities in India*, the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, pp. 468-558. See other references in the Chapter on the Women of India; also Cumming, Sir John, *Political India*, Ch. 8, *Women in Indian Politics*.  
<sup>7</sup>Report of the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Report), Vol. I, p. 53.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, and others.<sup>10</sup> Even Ghandi was amazed at the advance of women into public life during the last political non-violent campaign against the government.

Connected with this women's movement in social advancement, in various direct and indirect ways, are other organized activities which have similar objectives, at least in part. Practically all of them have a basis in reform movements within the Hindu religion. Such names of organizations as the Brahmo Samaj, the Prathana Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Vedic Mission, the Ramakrishna Mission, and the Servants of India Society are familiar to all who study modern Indian advance. Such societies, among other activities, run day and night schools, boarding houses for homeless laborers, industrial schools, free libraries, and cooperative credit societies. Modern industrial centers also have aided in the task of social reform. Homes like the Seva Sadan headquarters in Bombay have been established in numerous cities to teach cottage industries, nursing, and sewing to widows and other women needing family assistance.

**Social Reconstruction Among Indian Villages.** In the foregoing chapters, at different times, there has been given a descriptive account of the poor physical, economic, and social conditions generally prevalent among Indian villages. There has also been given, at least incidentally, some hint as to what is being done to improve these conditions. However, since village improvement, of late, has reached the proportions of a nation-wide movement, special attention should be given this phase in our account of contemporary social movements in India.

From the previous accounts, one may surmise that these villages, untouched by western influence, have done very little in an organized way toward social planning, as that term is now being used in certain countries of the West. The term "social planning" implies an orderly looking ahead to the supplying of defined social needs, actual or anticipated, and a working command of the philosophies, facts, and techniques involved in successful social organization. But the seeming unconcern of Indian villages as to their condition, in recent years, has been disturbed. For a number of years many agencies within the country have been attacking specific village problems, in such ways as: inaugurating campaigns to stamp out cholera, malaria, and other death-dealing diseases; the promotion of movements to prevent and to alleviate famines; the organizing of efforts to improve village sanitation and housing; the instituting of schemes for extending irrigation, road construction, and agricultural improvements; the abolition of illiteracy; the

<sup>10</sup>For a more complete account of women leadership in this movement, see Das, *former cit.*, Chs. 10, 13, 14.



provision of cooperative banking facilities; etc. But these agencies, on the whole, have been acting more or less independently of each other. This condition has appealed to many thoughtful persons as wasteful and ineffective, so there has gradually emerged a movement toward the unification of effort through consolidation or coordination in some form. Thus Mukerjee writes: "Rural development must be surveyed as a whole, studied as a whole, and dealt with as a whole . . . . The horde of officials who now deal piecemeal with the problems of the villager is more likely to exasperate than to arouse him from his present attitude of indifference to all forms of progress . . . . One of these [officials] deals with cooperative credit, a second with improved seed and new implements, a third man comes to inoculate the cattle against rinderpest, a fourth inspects the village school, a fifth preaches the benefits of better sanitation . . . . In addition to the [visits of a] non-official election canvasser or some aspiring politician. All these are attached to independent departments between which there is often little or no connection."<sup>11</sup> When we add to the list of officials mentioned by Mr. Mukerjee a number of other agencies such as Christian missions, the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army, philanthropic individuals, and numerous reform samajes,—all interested in village improvement and working more or less independently—we at once sense the need for united effort.

**The Rural Reconstruction Unit.** In briefly stating what is being done toward the unification of effort toward village improvement in India, three introductory observations should first be made:

First, Government, especially under the leadership of the present Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, is exhibiting an intelligent interest in village improvement. In former years Government has attempted to promote rural improvement in various ways, such as by fostering investigation in the agricultural colleges and other research institutes, the extension of education through the agricultural departments and schools, the promotion of cooperative societies, the promotion of irrigation, etc. In more recent years, however, the movement has taken new forms. For example, for a number of years the Punjab has had a Rural Community Board at the center of Government, with the Minister of Education as Chairman, and community boards in each district. In 1933, this organization was slightly revised through the appointment of a Commissioner of Rural Reconstruction. A similar commissioner has been appointed by the Government of Bengal, and by some of the Independent Indian States. In other states or provincial governments, central committees for village improvement are provided. In Bombay Pres-

<sup>11</sup>Mukerjee, B. B., *Cooperation and Rural Welfare in India*, pp. 10-14.

idency the Revenue Commissioners, working through the local officials, are charged with the work of organization for village improvement; and in some places the cooperative societies are leading the work. These efforts are being encouraged by Christian missions, private agencies, and special Indian Village Welfare Associations in London and Delhi.<sup>12</sup> A major purpose of all these recent efforts of government and supporting agencies has been the organization of voluntary village welfare associations. These associations promote agricultural improvement, adult education, public school improvement, circulating libraries, dispensaries, training of midwives, cooperative societies, arbitration of village disputes, village councils, scouting, rural leadership training, etc.<sup>13</sup>

Second, many of the private agencies, including Christian missions, while heretofore working rather independently, have done valuable pieces of rural welfare work. In this they have been the forerunners of the larger movement evidently now under way, and so should be honored for their foresight and sacrificial fortitude. However, many of the leaders in this movement of rural reconstruction, such as the Reverend J. Z. Hodge, Secretary of the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon, realize that rural reconstruction among Indian villages is a complex and a heavy undertaking which calls for the devoted and the united effort of all the agencies at work in this particular field. These leaders are taking the initiative toward effecting this coordination, and recent reports indicate that many agencies have caught the spirit of united effort in the enterprise.<sup>14</sup>

Third, the description of almost any specific piece of rural organization, especially since the visit to India of the late Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield, makes use of the term, "rural reconstruction unit"; hence this term needs consideration at this time. Dr. Butterfield stated his conception of what the rural reconstruction unit in India should be, in these words:

"A Rural Reconstruction Unit is a group of contiguous villages, perhaps ten or fifteen in number, in which as full a program as possible of rural construction service shall be made available

<sup>12</sup>The reader especially interested in this topic, is referred to such publications as: Brayne, F. L., *The Remaking of Village India*; Darling, M. L., *The Punjab Peasant*; Wiser, C. V. and Wm. H., *Behind Mud Walls*; Manna, H. R., *Land and Labor in a Decent Village*; Calvert, H., *The Laws and Principles of Cooperation*; Strickland, C. F., *Introduction to Cooperation in India*; Strickland, C. F., *The Progress of Rural Welfare in India, 1934*; Butterfield, K. L., *The Christian Mission in Rural India*; *The Lindsay Report on Higher Christian Education*; Olcott, Mason, *Village Schools in India*; Van Doren, Alice, *Fourteen Experiments in Rural Education*; Hatch, D. S., *Up from Poverty in Rural India*; and the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV.

<sup>13</sup>For example, see Strickland, C. F., *The Progress of Rural Welfare in India, 1934*; Martensdam, a publication of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the U. S. and Canada (N. Y.), 1934—an account of D. Spencer Hatch's work in South India; and other publications like *Dehagram, the Allahabad Farmer*, and the *National Christian Council Review*.

<sup>14</sup>See current issues of such publications named in the previous footnote.



to all the people. All agencies for educational, health, economic and social progress will be urged to pool their efforts through some form of community council in an attempt to get people to cooperate in building a new type of Indian rural community. The Church must lead this endeavor to make the enterprise thoroughly Christian in spirit."<sup>15</sup>

Christian missions, for a long time, have been working for village improvement, though perhaps not always with the objective of an all-round program participated in cooperatively by many agencies. But in many missions, rural reconstruction is being planned along such lines. At Dornakal, the church itself is the agency for leading in rural reconstruction, with its efforts rather narrowly confined to religious education and evangelization. At Ushagram, Sangli, Yeotmal, Anklesvar, Borsad, Allahabad, Ghaziabad, Katpadi, Etah, Chingleput, Moga, and a number of other important mission centers, the mission school has been the chief agency in such rural reconstruction as is attempted, and its efforts have been educational along many lines, and cooperative with Government and other agencies.

**Other Types of Rural Reconstruction.** Others less intimately concerned with Christian missions in India than was Dr. Butterfield, while agreeing with him in principle as to the nature of the work that needs to be done in and by such reconstructive units, differ somewhat as to the probable number of villages that should be included therein and as to the agency that should be the focus of the enterprise. Thus T. S. Kochak, former principal of the Government Agricultural School at Bulandshahr, thinks that schools such as at Bulandshahr might well be the energizing and the service centers of village reconstruction in India. According to his views, these schools should offer many kinds of courses adjusted in purpose, content, method, and time offered to the needs of important groups in the surrounding villages. These schools, besides doing practical farming and farm demonstration work open to public inspection, would encourage self-help on the part of the people and offer expert advice and services of many kinds. He thinks that twelve of these schools for the United Provinces, and 500 for the whole of India, would make them close enough together to be within fairly easy access to the remotest villages in the unit-areas. He further thinks that the most important function of Christian missions in the work of rural reconstruction is the inauguration of needed reforms and the addition of moral qualities to the work of the reconstruction. As to the method of organization of these units, Mr. Kochak

<sup>15</sup>Butterfield, Kenyon L., *The Christian Mission in Rural India*, Ch. V., *The International Missionary Council*, London, 1921; also see the Poona Report of the Conference on Rural Work, p. 5.

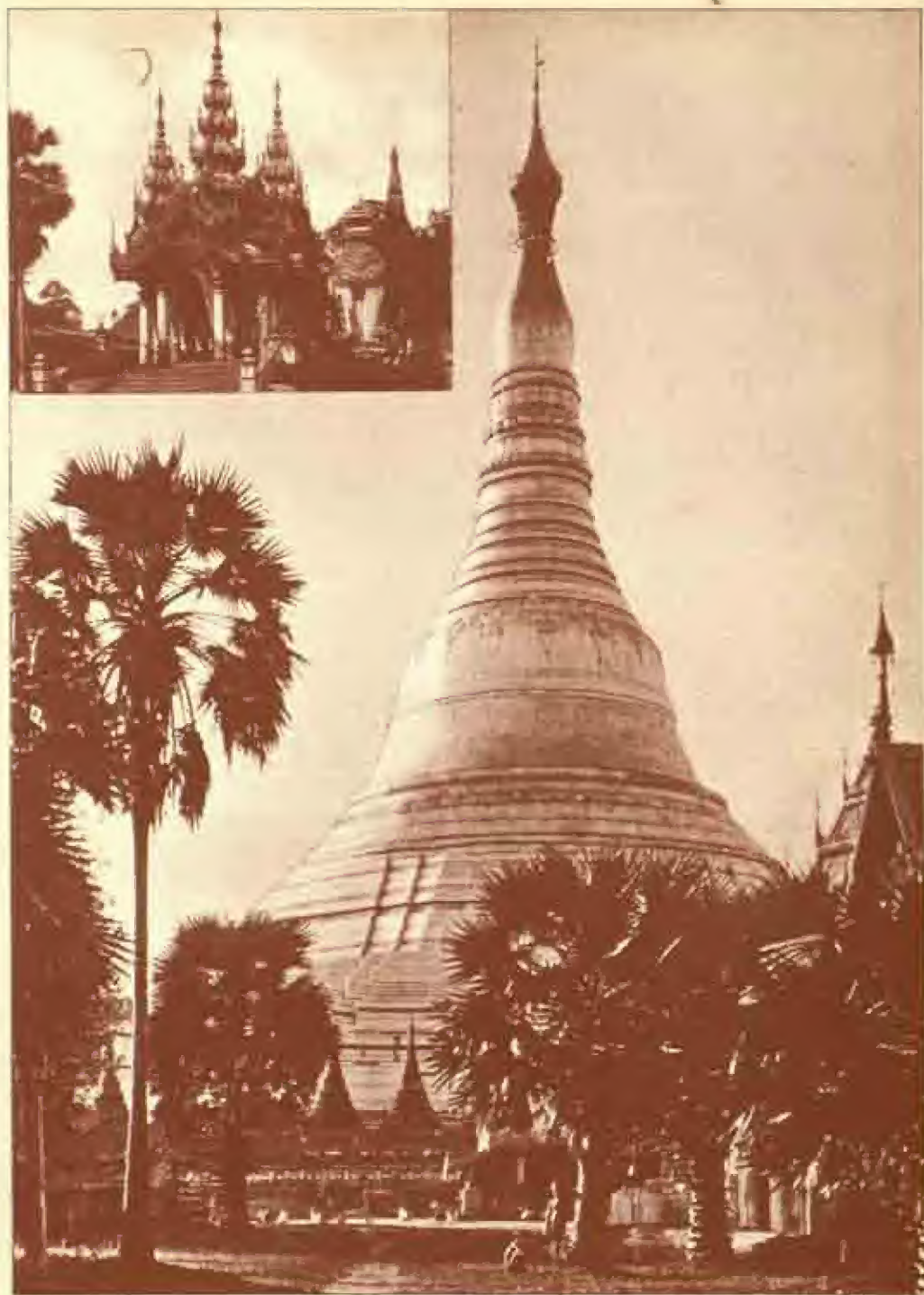


FIG. XXIII. INDIAN TEMPLES (C) *The Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon.*  
*Inset, the south entrance at the base of the elevation upon which the pagoda*  
*is situated.*





makes two pithy suggestions: First, the economic status and the moral quality of the individual must be improved before reconstruction units of this kind can win much success; for one cannot combine twelve dead villages and automatically have a live resulting unit. Second, these units cannot be planted *de novo*, but must be developed gradually around centers of vital interest. Constituting these centers, he conceives, is the function of public schools such as that at Bulandshahr.<sup>16</sup>

The Young Men's Christian Association, as developed in and about Martandam in the Travancore area by Dr. D. Spencer Hatch, illustrates another slightly different concept of the nature of the rural reconstruction unit. Here, under the active leadership of this socio-religious organization, many services of a community and nation-building value are performed. These include agricultural education, health education and village sanitation, recreation, cooperative marketing, leadership training, and other useful activities. While the Christian church, no doubt, is functioning here as an energizing element, it is not focal in these activities; nor is Government, as would naturally be the case if public schools, such as the one at Bulandshahr, should become the focal agencies of reconstruction.

Rural reconstruction inaugurated largely on an economic basis by individuals motivated by broad humanitarian impulses is illustrated by Sir Daniel Hamilton's land colonization project at Gosaba. About thirty years ago, Sir Daniel established upon the waste lands of the sunderbunds of the lower Ganges Valley a colony consisting of poor people. After varying experiences, these lands were brought under successful agricultural production, more than twenty villages were established, and the whole enterprise successfully woven into an effective self-help unit. Cooperation is the watchword here, and it functions in credit societies, in a cooperative rice mill, a cooperative selling society, cooperative health societies, etc. There are here only a few Christians, the church being relatively weak and ineffective; and there is no school that can claim to approach the ideal set by Mr. Kochak.

The Poet Tagore, working along slightly different lines, at Santiniketan, is laying special stress upon rural reconstruction and the development of cultural appreciations.

Other agencies, including the Government and Christian missions, have sought to accomplish rural readjustment and reconstruction through agricultural colonization, and, to that end, irrigation schemes have been accomplished, agricultural education

<sup>16</sup>For a review of data of this general nature, see the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Vol. IV, pp. 109-115.



and supervision provided, and various sorts of cooperative associations organized.<sup>17</sup> In Gurgaon District, near Delhi, there has been conducted for a number of years, until recently, an interesting piece of rural reconstruction by Mr. F. L. Brayne, a Government civil officer. Thus, to a degree, the whole civil district became the reconstruction unit, and the energizing force was Government personified in a wideawake, dynamic representative. Education, community councils, scouting, village guides, cooperation and official regulation were the methods employed here in making the villages more sanitary, more sightly, and more self-respecting.<sup>18</sup> The public schools, and other nation-building agencies, including the Christian church and missions, cooperated in the various undertakings, but were not expected to dominate them.

Private corporations, with a strong humanitarian bent, have also engaged in village reconstruction work. A good example is that of the Empress Mills at Nagpur. In cooperation with the local Young Men's Christian Association, this corporation secured for its workers on the outskirts of the city of Nagpur a building site for a new village. Good houses owned by their occupants were erected on easy terms through loans made by the mills; modern sanitary sewage and water systems were installed; recreational grounds, child-welfare centers, schools, scouting, tiffin sheds for workers, etc., were provided, and cleanliness and beauty consciously sought. A casual visitor to this new village can see many praiseworthy things that stand out in contrast with the insanitary conditions and dilapidated appearances so characteristic of the villages at large.

Another agency of significant potential importance that has recently entered the field of village welfare is the All-India Village Industries Association, launched as the result of a resolution of the Indian National Congress at Bombay, October 27, 1934. This is a self-acting, independent, and non-political organization, consisting of men and women who whole-heartedly desire to be identified with the villagers and the promotion of their welfare. The constitution of the organization states its object as the reorganization and reconstruction of villages, including the revival, encouragement, and improvement of their industries and the moral and physical advancement of their inhabitants. The pledge of members is as follows: "Having read the constitution and rules of the All-India Village Industries Association, I offer to be a member thereof, and, God helping, promise to devote the best part

<sup>17</sup>Mr. Darling has given a very complete account of the Government's activities along these lines in his description of the canal colonies established in the Punjab (see his *Punjab Passant*). The Government, in the Sind and, on a smaller scale elsewhere, is opening other vast areas of land for settlement. One of the most notable of the many colonization projects inaugurated by Christian missions is that of the Irish Presbyterian Mission in the Gujarat.

<sup>18</sup>For a detailed account of Mr. Brayne's work in Gurgaon District, see his *Remaking of Village India*; *Ibid.*, *Socrates in an Indian Village*.

of my energy and talents to the furtherance of its object, which is the all-round welfare of the villages of India. So long as I remain a member of the Association, I shall not take part in any Campaign of Civil Disobedience."<sup>10</sup> This organization is being promoted by Mahatma Gandhi and a number of other prominent Indian reformers, and may become one of the most notable and beneficent movements assisted by this great Indian leader. While the Association, as yet, is too young to have accomplished a great deal of a tangible nature, its legion of friends and advocates, both at home and abroad, see in it the possible development of a great reconstructive and reform movement, which, having its origin in the work of the Christian missions, Government, and other agencies, is now ready to proceed under Indian leadership and along lines consistent with the culture and genius of the people. The formation of this association with such lofty aims and devoted leadership seems both timely and appropriate as a help in the solution of what is probably India's most important problem—the revitalizing and rebuilding of her village life. The attention that this problem is now getting from so many different kinds of agencies scattered throughout the land, and the high purpose and the good will with which these agencies are motivated, seem to be making Indian village improvement one of the greatest social movements since the reforms of Buddha.

Additional types of Indian village reconstruction might be uncovered through further research, but our present account reveals its essential purpose and scope. Yet, in our enthusiasm for Indian village improvement, we need to be practical; in fact, candor calls for a note of warning. Even though the importance of the task has been recognized by many agencies and individuals, we need to recall the age-old handicaps portrayed in the foregoing chapters, which stand in the way of progress. Hence it is obvious that a task so complex and so great requires time and experimentation, and it demands patience, zeal, and trained intelligence on the part of the leaders in the movement. But fundamental to all efforts toward the social and economic reconstruction of Indian villages is a sound understanding of the cultural heritages and the present conditions of these villages. This implies a sympathetic and an intelligent approach on the part of the leadership in the movement, as well as a wide and varied application of science and education among the masses, the development of a certain amount of industrialization, and the promotion of cooperation and other socialized effort. And, strange as it may seem, the writer believes that a factor of great potential importance in the reconstruction of the 700,-

<sup>10</sup>For further details, see the *Indian Reformer*, Dec. 22, 1934, pp. 261-2.



000 villages of India is the rapid electrification of these villages. That this is not a fantastic hope is shown by the fact that in Mysore State, cheap electric energy has already been provided in 142 villages and towns in the last few years through a hydro-electric development. The delivery of such power to the villages will preclude the necessity of an industrial drift toward the cities where normal family life is practically impossible. As is being discovered in the West, when village life is made attractive and rural life is relieved of its age-old drudgery, the educated classes will become citizens of the villages, hence will furnish the villages resident leadership for further improvement. Gandhi's most recent statement on the use of improved machinery is that he is opposed to machines only when they tend to enslave man.

**Summary.** By way of partial summary, these facts seem to emerge: First, there is a widespread consciousness among an enlarging number of people of the need for village improvement. How deeply that consciousness is felt among the masses of villagers themselves has yet to be shown, though, no doubt, some progress has been made among them.

Second, there are enough projects of village reconstruction under way or planned, involving units of varying size, different methods, objectives and local agencies, to constitute a real experimental laboratory in social organization. Through adequate research on the part of some central agency these projects should be critically studied and reported.

Third, there is much loose and fanciful thinking as to the nature of rural reconstruction units, their functions, their practicability, etc. This seems especially true when we contemplate the iron-clad customs of the traditional Indian villages, the vastness and the poverty of the country, and the poor showing made along similar lines in most western countries.

Fourth, much of the effort planned along the lines of rural reconstruction needs to be socialized, as well as guided by a leadership possessing a fundamental knowledge of social science. Leaders need training, especially in the principles of social organization; and sociologists from the West may well prove valuable advisors in this field.

### *Emergent Leaders in Modern Reform Movements*

Most of the movements described here center about one or more dynamic individuals. Several leaders of the women's movement have already been mentioned; and in connection with the various episodes and accomplishments entering into India's his-

torical past, which have been described in part in the preceding chapters, there has been given some account of men and women from the West who have made their lives a part of the history of this interesting country. Hence we shall pursue the subject of Indian leadership a little further in terms of Indian national leaders.

**Natarajan's Contribution.** A leader in these movements of social reform is Mr. K. Natarajan, Editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*, perhaps the best Indian weekly printed in English. Mr. Natarajan was invited to the United States in 1933 by Chicago University to give a series of lectures in the field of which he is an outstanding exponent. On his trip he was accompanied by a daughter who had spent two terms in Indian jails because of her relationship to the swaraj movement. The attitude of both father and daughter indicated that the Indian people as a whole are demanding freedom of a new variety in India—a freedom that will affect every phase of life in that country. The people wish to be free from age-old customs which hinder progress, free from a foreign overlordship, and free from crushing social and economic burdens placed upon them by their own people of higher castes. Through the medium of the press, Mr. Natarajan is giving forceful expression to this demand for freedom.

**Tagore's Contribution.** Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has an International University at Santiniketan in Bengal.<sup>20</sup> At one time or another professors and the staff have come from other oriental and from western countries. Students likewise come from all over India and from other countries. On a visit the writer paid to the institution he talked with a student from Mexico. In connection with the college work at the university, Tagore has maintained an experimental agricultural and rural undertaking to meet the needs of the surrounding villagers. Tagore is an international figure, having lectured both in Europe and in America, and a few years ago was the recipient of the Nobel prize in poetry. He is closely in touch with all the advance movements in his country, and is looked to for authoritative statements at times of recurring crisis. His judgment is widely accepted. He is one speaker whom the writer has heard in India who was listened to in silence by an Indian audience without the customary shuffling and confusion that occur in most lecture halls. The *Poet*, as he is known to his countrymen, has carried forward, in the Brahmo Samaj, the aims of his father, who was one of the original founders of that great Hindu reform movement. In many ways the positions taken by that movement have been largely accepted by Hinduism as a whole.

Tagore comes from a wealthy Brahmin family with connec-

<sup>20</sup> Andrews, C. F., the Visva-Bharati, Natson & Co., Madras.



tions running back to the ancient kings of the country. Yet he has made himself emotionally close to the people of the rural sections. His university is in a rural setting. One of the last questions the writer asked him was what he felt was the greatest thing that could be done in India. His answer was: "If I can do anything for the three thousand people immediately around Santiniketan I will feel that is the greatest accomplishment I can perform." To that end he has brought in artists, artisans, and specialists in rural life to assist in his program. For a number of years he had a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church on his staff. A man closely connected with Santiniketan is a young Indian, Sudhakanta Roy Choudhury, who represents in excellent detail the new approach of the youth of India to modern problems. For a number of years he deliberately lived in a very orthodox Hindu community in order to assist in breaking down old customs. He antagonized many of the residents, but succeeded by his example in liberalizing much of the local sentiment.

**Gandhi's Contribution.** Much of the stimulus in the changing times in India has come from the constant travel of Mahatma Gandhi in all the provinces. Since the year 1933, Gandhi has been occupied in a campaign to improve the position of the untouchables.—*Harijans*, or "Children of God," as he beautifully calls them. But his advice and counsel is asked for and accepted literally by millions of Indians upon every subject that troubles them. His travels have given millions of his fellow-countrymen the chance to see him, and to recognize his very deep sincerity. More than any other Indian he has earned the right to speak for India. His emphasis is insistently upon the right of Indians to freedom,—the right to grow as fast as their abilities will permit. He is a thorough-going student of social, economic, and political conditions, believes insistently in the centrality of religion as a force in human affairs, and has sacrificed in countless ways in order to secure advance for his people.

Gandhi represents the older type of religious *rishi* who delved deeply into the fields of personal philosophy and religion, plus the new approach of applying the discoveries in philosophy and religion to human affairs.<sup>21</sup> He puts his emphasis upon the organization of a better style of human society which will provide a more adequate opportunity for men and women to grow individually and collectively. Like men who are arising in other countries, he sees beyond the boundaries of his own country, but also realizes that it is essential to improve conditions in India as a basis for adding to the general world welfare. One of his statements declares that

<sup>21</sup>Gandhi, M. K., *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad.

"patriotism is the same as humanity." Gandhi's attempt to free his country is more than a desire to be free from the rule of another country. Gandhi is really engaged in separating his country from an atmosphere of fear, and in developing a new insistence upon self-expression.

Gandhi and Tagore come together on such a platform as is found in the words of Tagore used in a speech on the occasion of a recent Gandhi birthday: "The people, the foundation of whose society is full of cracks owing to internal strifes and restrictions; who go about carrying heaps of refuse in their almanacs; who, with minds devoid of discrimination because of ignorance, rush to wash away their accumulated sins of generations in particular waters at particular auspicious moments; who fondly cherish the self-abasement of their intellects and powers, giving it the name of infallible scripture; such a people can never permanently and with depth of realization keep up that strenuous endeavour which can sever the bonds of inner and outward servitude to others and preserve with steadfast strength the heavy responsibilities of freedom against the onslaughts of all enemies. It must be borne in mind that the supreme test of manhood lies in battling against inner enemies. Heroism of such high quality is not required in fighting external foes."

The emphasis in Indian social reform is no longer in resting upon the past, but on preparing the nation for the future. To that task every outstanding leader in recent years has bent his efforts. To students of social affairs in India it is amazing the place that has been given to principles enunciated by Jesus,—fundamental concepts, which, according to some thinkers, are imbedded in Vedic philosophy. Principles that the West has always conceived to be unworkable have been employed by men like Gandhi and Tagore. It seems probable that India is opening up a new chapter in human history by giving emphasis to principles that certainly would make for a larger freedom than that to which we have been accustomed in the West for many years. At the same time this freedom is seen to be concerned with large groups, rather than with individuals permitted to do as they please in community or economic life. India is experimenting with a new sense of social responsibility where the individual submerges his personal interests to the improvement of society as a whole. This sense of responsibility is not altogether new, as represented by lasting values found in the caste and joint-family systems. In these systems there has been a protection as well as a control of the individual.

**Radhakrishnan's Contribution.** Such an idea, in modern terms, is to be found in the life and teaching of men such as Sir



S. Radhakrishnan, former Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University. Titles of his recent books indicate the trend of his thought: *The Hindu View of Life*, which discusses a Hinduism which is orientating itself in an entirely new environment; and *An Idealist View of Life*,<sup>22</sup> which sweeps out beyond Hindu borders and takes a glance at all modern aspects of human philosophical and spiritual development.

Dr. Radhakrishnan is a representative of an increasing army of Indian students educated in the modern tradition, with their college and university work done in English entirely in India. At nineteen he secured his B. A. degree from Madras University, at twenty-one his M. A. from the same institution, and at the same time received an appointment as Assistant Professor in Philosophy in one of the colleges of Madras. Seven years later he was appointed Professor. Four years later he was appointed to the highest educational service in India, the Imperial Grade. The next year he went to the Department of Philosophy at Calcutta University. In 1930 he served as Professor of Comparative Religions at Oxford University in England, and the following year was given a life position in Calcutta University, being released temporarily to serve as Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University. Yet very recently, he has been appointed Professor of Eastern Religions at Oxford University.

The Professor is not separated by his educational interests from the political and economic life of his country. Rather, his research has led him closer and closer to the evident need for renewing the life of his country in every field. Again we find in the life and work of Dr. Radhakrishnan, as in that of other leaders, a belief in the need of a profoundly religious view of life in a generation that in many ways has lost its ancient sense of the reality of religion. That this view should be tolerant and broad is suggested by the resolutions of a recent conference of the All-India Social Service Conference: "This conference considers it essential to the ordered progress and social well-being of the country that Indian culture, enriched by valuable contributions made by Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism, should hold its own among the cultures of the world and make its distinctive contribution to world civilization. This end can only be procured if Hindus, Moslems, Christians, Parsis, Anglo-Indians and other Indian communities are welded and fused into one nation." The ancient unity that is basic in India today is really a spirit of tolerance for new ideas, and a recognition that progress is made by accepting facts no matter from what sources they may happen to come.

<sup>22</sup>The Macmillan Co.

**The Contributions of Other Leaders.** As shown in the chapter on Indian Schools, leadership in India is found in many fields. For example, Sir P. C. Roy, the most eminent chemist India has produced in modern times, has devoted practically all his efforts for years in the field of social uplift and the application of the scientific approach to India's problems. His efforts have included sponsoring industrial exhibits and addressing meetings all over India, as well as organizing in Calcutta the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, one of the largest plants of its kind in the Orient. The plant is managed entirely by Bengalis on capital supplied from Indian sources. It was the writer's privilege to be the first reader of Professor Roy's recent autobiography, *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist*, one of the most illuminating books on social trends in modern India.

Other men of science have attained positions of eminence in India in recent years. Names such as those of Sir C. V. Raman and Sir J. C. Bose are well-known to many American readers and students. Dr. Raman is a great physicist who received the Nobel prize in that field a year or two ago. Sir J. C. Bose has been an intense student in the field of several sciences, particularly linking botany and zoology, in his determination of common elements in plant and animal life. More and more as we study these men we see how closely they keep themselves in touch with the changes that are taking place in all aspects of Indian life. They do not pretend to confine themselves to their laboratories. They stand constantly for the application of scientific truths which know no national boundaries.

Men more or less in the purely political field would include Jawaharlal Nehru, an outstanding leader in the youth element of the urge toward political freedom; Subhas Bose, former Mayor of Calcutta; A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, a leader of the Justice Party in Madras; Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who recently formed the Nationalist Party; Sir Abdur Rahim, called the ablest non-official leader in the Assembly at Delhi; the Aga Khan, leader of a Mohammedan sect and chairman of the British India delegation of the Round Table conferences in London; Vallabhai Patel, on several occasions President of the Indian National Congress; Shaukat Ali, leader among Mohammedans; the Right Hon. V. S. S. Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, active and constructive leaders in the present political reconstruction of India. Nor, in this connection, should we forget Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, spokesman for the depressed classes at the London Round Table conferences, and a recog-



nized leader of these classes in their current efforts for political and social freedom.<sup>23</sup>

In a study of India it is quickly observed that there are personalities at work that in method are often at variance with each other. This often makes for more rapid advance than if a single person were directing the entire movement or movements, for mistakes are readily discernible in the efforts of someone else, and can be profited by. For instance, the youth element in the political nationalist movement believes far more in violent methods than does the older group; yet the former has thus far subordinated its beliefs to the non-violent beliefs of the latter. To westerners the names of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore seem often to be coupled together as if they were in total agreement with respect to the problems of India and their treatment; yet, quite often they disagree. While the two men are great leaders, their methods are totally different. Gandhi has resorted to politics and active organized propaganda to seek ends that Tagore would attain through less coercive and more strictly cultural methods. Gandhi has now relinquished any active leadership he had (and it was great) in the Indian National Congress, and is spending all his efforts with three special associations: The Spinners Association, the Harijan Association (depressed classes), and the Village Industries Association. Yet neither man outranks the other in interest in India, and in a sense the efforts of these men are complementary. Yet in one important respect these men are alike: both are deeply religious. In fact few leaders of modern India can maintain their position of leadership without an emphasis upon and an experience of religion. Religion is, indeed, the outstanding characteristic of Indian culture.

### *Conclusion*

It would not be entirely fair to leave the subject of modern social trends in India without at least a casual mention of the fact that there has been no important break in continuity here in the departments of knowledge, science, and art for nearly five thousand years. Thus, present-day Indian culture has a substantial historical background. This fact has been made clearly apparent by archaeological discoveries in Mohenjodaro and Harappa in recent years. According to the Director-General of Archaeology, Sir John Marshall, these two cities about the year 3000 B. C. were already remarkably well organized. "The roomy and well-built houses and the degree of luxury denoted by the presence in them

<sup>23</sup>The reader interested in a fuller account of leadership connected with the swaraj movement, is referred to Cumming, Sir John, *Political India*, especially Chs. 10 and 11.

of walls and bathrooms, betoken a condition of the citizens, at least equal to that found in Sumer, and markedly in advance of that prevailing in contemporary Babylonia and Egypt, where the royal monuments of the kings' palaces, tombs and temples may have been superior to anything of their class to be found in India, but where no private dwelling houses of the citizens have been discovered at all comparable with those unearthed in India."<sup>24</sup> This discovery points to a sense of social responsibility for the common people beyond that found in other civilizations of that period. It likewise suggests that while India will necessarily be affected by influences emanating from western sources, there is much within her own culture which will assist in rectifying social evils.

Finally, a statement by the late Lala Lajpat Rai, member of the Legislative Assembly at Delhi and a director of the Servants of India Society, will best illustrate the attitude of such Indian leaders as are worthy of consideration:

"In the matter of the rights of women, the change in the mentality of educated India is distinctly progressive and it may be confidently asserted that *purdah* (seclusion of women), early marriage, and the prohibition against widow remarriage, will go. There has never been any *purdah* in the South. In the North its rigor has been confined to city folk of respectability, mostly Moham-medans. In the villages throughout India there has hardly been any *purdah*. The custom of child marriage is fast disappearing. That also was confined to particular classes. Prohibition of widow remarriage was never universal. It was generally confined to the higher castes. Among these, too, widow remarriages are multiplying. The present custom of marriage being arranged by parents will also cease to function, and marriage by choice among adult persons will take its place. The immediate cause of it may be the impact of European civilization, but it will not be a new thing. The economic independence of women may come, but only to a limited extent, as Indians as a whole are still loath to think of their women having to earn either for themselves or for others. There is a deep-rooted sentiment against it, with a reason behind it. Birth control is, I think, an entirely new idea for India. It will grow. As regards the improvement of the Hindu women's position for the purposes of inheritance, that, too, may come, though the break-up of the joint-family system and the power to dispose of one's property by bequest will make it rather unnecessary."<sup>25</sup> And the conflict that one might expect in a variety of races, languages, and religions is being broken down by the acceptance of leadership

<sup>24</sup>Part II of Vol. CXLV of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, p. 191, Sept. 1929.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 194-196; Rai, Lala Lajpat, *Unhappy India*, Bannu Pub. Co., Calcutta.



of men and women *from* all groups by men and women *of* all groups. This is an outstanding factor in present-day India, and when it is seen in its true perspective, India will make the rapid advances advocated by her leaders, and will offer additional contributions to world culture for which she is eminently fitted.

In further conclusion we should note that India has always followed leaders. In greater or less measure other countries have done likewise; but India has done so consistently, and still continues the practice. Because of this fact, it is important that we should keep our eyes upon men of the types we have mentioned in this brief survey. What they say and do today, India will say and do tomorrow,<sup>20</sup> though for the teeming village masses that tomorrow will probably be measured by the slow-moving seconds of Brahma's timeless clock.

---

<sup>20</sup>For an account of other leaders, see especially the chapter on Indian Schools; and also Fardah, by Mrs. Das (form cit.).

## *Chapter XXV*

### AN AFTERTHOUGHT

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to turn the spotlight of inquiry and interpretation upon a number of the facets of contemporary Indian society. Yet, in so doing no attempt has been made, either in scope or in treatment, to be encyclopaedic; for it is clear that the great complexity of contemporary Indian society makes a full treatment of the subject impossible in a single volume such as this. However, the facts presented, including some of the more important current problems and situations of Indian society, have been examined in the light of their historical backgrounds, their cultural significance to present-day India, and, to some extent, in terms of the international relations of India, as well.

In this enterprise, the writer has had no thesis to defend and no cause to win at court, even though some of the matters dealt with have been of a controversial nature. Yet, sensing the vastness of India, the diversity of her people and social cultures, and the clash of opinions of many people interested in India, he has attempted to present the different sides of certain controversial questions in an open-minded manner, leaving to the reader the opportunity to arrive independently at his own conclusions. However, without intending to influence the reader unduly, the writer feels that at least a few conclusions have emerged in this study that may be stated with a degree of certainty.

**Important Problems.** India, like all countries of the world, has a number of important problems. These include, especially so far as the masses are concerned, the relaxing or the abolishment of the burdens of debt, disease, hunger, insanitary living conditions, the disinclination to cooperate outside of the patterns set by caste rule, the vast number of folkways that hinder agricultural improvement, and an inadequate recognition of the value of man himself as he wends his way across the sea of time that separates birth and death. As is shown in the foregoing chapters, a number of the foreign friends and a number of the intelligent nationals of



India sense these problems rather clearly and are taking organized steps to solve them. We should sound the admonition to the reformers, however, that care should be taken to build upon that which is solid and tested by the long annals of India's past, and that which is proposed should be developed in terms of India's own cultural welfare. E. Stanley Jones, in his *Christ of the Indian Road*, recognizes the soundness of this admonition.

But probably the most important problem facing the forces of reconstruction in India is that of making a suitable combination of ancient Indian philosophy and current scientific method. At first thought it may appear that ancient Indian philosophy and modern western science are mutually incompatible, hence their combination could not be made. But this difficulty is not insurmountable. Those who have dispassionately noted the need for scientific thinking and the fruits of scientific discovery on the part of India, and the need for greater emphasis upon spiritual things and a life of contemplation on the part of the West, see clearly the need for a combination of these values both in India and the West. Thus Indian leaders, both native and foreign, need to catch and retain a firm hold of the quiet, contemplative philosophy that has been so characteristic of the wise men of her past, and combine with this contemplative philosophy the facts, the techniques, and the attitudes involved in scientific method. It is so easy, during these difficult times, to become emotional. That is the fault of so many people who are interested in Indian affairs. But it should be borne in mind that emotionality, *per se*, is an expression of weakness rather than of strength, and that the careful student of Indian problems should be and will be guided by science rather than by sentiment.

This is placing a heavy burden upon many impressionable visitors and impatient native leaders who seem to have lost their way in the jungle of problems and events. However, one who is trained in the scientific method of investigation, and who has a working knowledge of Indian history and philosophy, will readily understand that India's past greatness and future potentialities are imperfectly recognized and poorly represented by persons lacking in the fundamental knowledge of India's culture or in the basic forces entering into her current problems. He will also note that emotionality, however intense or sincere, or in whatever helpful or obstructive channels it may flow, is a poor substitute for scientific and reasoned thinking. The emotional criticisms sometimes lodged against the various political, economic, and social conditions of that country, as well as the exhibition of pollyanna optimism and unstinted utopian praise, alike, make but little appeal to one who

is scientific and constructive in his efforts to understand the real India and her culture. In terms of the past ages and in the light of verifiable facts bearing upon current problems, he will seek his own answer to these problems. However, at best, his task will be difficult. The diversity of the country, the ignorance of the masses, age-old animosities among certain social groups, and the selfish cupidity of special-interest groups, both native and foreign, make it difficult indeed to understand the situation clearly, or to keep a cool and judicious attitude toward it.

It should be borne in mind, however, that much of the difference of opinion upon the urgent problems of present-day India is honest and well-founded. This is true of other countries as well. The student of current world events may recall how the national legislative bodies among the leading contemporary countries of the world are often broken up into conflicting blocs and parties, accompanied by forceful argumentation and expressions of differences. The historian may recall that Gladstone and Disraeli, two famous British statesmen of the past century, and Jefferson and Hamilton, two noted statesmen of early American history, disagreed upon important matters of state. But an unbiased review of the activities of the abler leadership of India, both native and foreign, will impress one with the fact that substantial thinking is being done with respect to current problems and their solution. Often it will be seen that leaders supposed to be far apart in their thinking, basically agree; and that substantial progress along many lines is being made, even though it may not always come at the time or in the form originally desired. One who knows something of the work of numerous research institutions, especially in the fields of medicine and agriculture, the development that has been made in communication, transportation, irrigation, co-operation, village welfare, education, responsibility in government, and other lines of progress, cannot but help noting the patient, clear-headed, unselfish service of many men and women, both native and foreign, that has been bestowed upon India for many years past.

In spite of the emotionality and obstructiveness that have sometimes been exhibited on the part of certain political and religious leaders, India, through her good sense and conservatism, as in the long ages of the past, will go forward. She will probably allow all who claim to be leaders, both conservatives and radicals, the scientists and the fanatics, the utilitarians and the dreamers, to make such contributions as they may, and leave to future generations the task of assessing the value of their contributions. But such progress as involves the teeming village masses—those who



constitute the real India—will doubtless be a matter of slow evolution.

**India's Cultural Heritage.** It is probable that most travellers to India, in their last analysis, will say that it is India's social culture that interests them most. Broadly speaking, this would include the fundamental philosophies of life, the contributions of science and art, as well as the folkways that describe the externals of daily life so different in many ways from those of the West. But in whatever way the term is limited, India has a cultural heritage of which she may well be proud. A civilization that has a connected history extending from the present back into the mists of antiquity, while other nations have had their little day of power only to pass into history, should realize that it possesses important sources of strength that should not be despised. The reformer who would make radical changes in India's culture should suitably recognize this fact.

In paying this tribute to India's past, we do not mean to accept her culture without question. We must recognize the fact that unaided by western science, India has made but a poor showing in the mastery of many death-dealing diseases endemic to that country, and has not learned to increase her food supply so as to prevent vast throngs from actually experiencing the torments of hunger. Nor has she, unassisted by western influence, been noted for improved roads, bridges, railways, and telegraph lines; her constructive genius seems to have had its outlets chiefly in the creation of magnificent temples, palaces, royal audience halls, mausoleums, fine textiles, and the like. It is also true that her village masses are illiterate and socially retarded, and that many age-old customs and beliefs which long since should have been outgrown, yet survive to impede her progress. But, as frequently pointed out in the previous chapters, it should be remembered that there appear to be elements of social strength, even in many of these reputedly vicious beliefs and practices; thus, before they are entirely condemned, these beliefs and practices should be studied carefully in terms of India's historical past and the exigencies of the present.

On the other hand, India has heritages of a more clearly discernable value which she may well share with the West. These are: her profound religious aspirations; her love of philosophy; her scientific and mathematical discoveries; her treasures of art, architecture, and music; her respect for the aged, the learned, and the men of God, regardless of faith or creed; her spirit of tolerance toward those of different faith, creed, political theories, or social practice (especially true of the Hindus); her emphasis on modesty in women; her obligation placed upon families to care for their de-

pendent members, whether near or distantly related; her generosity toward persons in need whether relative, beggar, or priest; and her unwillingness to take life.<sup>1</sup> These values permeate Indian life as a whole, and consistently integrate it.

Thus, in comparing the cultures of India and western countries, it would seem that these cultures are mutually complementary. Each has something that the other needs to complete and to balance its cultural life. If the West can contribute her science and her spirit of endeavor to India, India, in turn, has a spirit of repose and philosophical contemplation that she can give to the West and that the West very much needs. Such reciprocity should be encouraged by the exchange of professors and students, by the encouragement of the exchange of goods, by travel and other efforts that will tend to introduce each to the best of the other. Such helpful exchanges will eventually break down chauvanistic beliefs in the West which seems to hold that: "Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet;"<sup>2</sup> that east of Suez there "aren't no Ten Commandments;"<sup>3</sup> and that, withal, in India, there is an entirely different system of human values than is common to the West. We should remind the reader that Kipling, who has written so interestingly and authoritatively upon India, out of the fullness of his knowledge, declares:

"But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed, nor Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from  
the ends of the earth!"<sup>4</sup>

In closing we may ask again, what does India have that makes her so attractive to the western journalist, traveller, trader, missionary, and scholar? Is it merely the simple folkways of the masses and the gaudy show of the wealthy and ruling classes that arouse such interest, or is it something more fundamental? Each will have to answer for himself; but whatever the cause of this interest, those who have had the rich experience of travelling or service in India can never be the same persons afterward. India has given something that the West, with all its progress and glamour, does not seem able to impart. Kipling gives expression to this fact, when, by the exercise of poetical fancy, he describes the hold that India has upon the British soldiers who have had Indian experi-

<sup>1</sup>Olcott, *Mason, Village Schools in India*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Kipling, *Rudyard, Ballad of East and West*, in *Departmental Ditties and Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads*, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

<sup>3</sup>Kipling, *Ibid.*, *Mandalay*.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, *The Ballad of East and West*.



ence. He thus pictures the longing of a returned soldier, whose thoughts, in a moment of lonely reverie, turn to the scenes of his former service:

"By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea,  
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me;  
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say:  
'Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!'"<sup>2</sup>

Likewise returned travellers or returned missionaries to India, if given opportunity to speak their minds freely, though they may deplore the insanitary conditions of the villages, the oppressive monsoon heat, and the poverty and the social backwardness of the masses, before they have finished, are almost sure to speak with feeling eagerness of many things. These include the beauties of the hill stations, the Himalayas, Kashmere, the inimitable Taj Mahal and the great temples; and they are apt to recall, with a feeling of reflective longing, even the crude little shrines by the way-side, the nocturnal whining yaps of the jackals, the masses loitering about at the bazaars or melas, the pattering of bare feet, the sing-song music of *bajanais*, and the vast number of other places or incidents that have impressed them and that bid them "come you back" to Mandalay, or to Ceylon, Darjeeling, Kodaikanal, or even to the former position as teacher, missionary, or doctor, among the dingy little inland villages in the jungles.

THE END

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, Mandalay.

# INDEX

- Ackerly, George A., 12  
 Adh-Kumbh Mela, 279  
 Aga Kahn, 353  
 Agra,  
     City, 304, 335  
     Province, 55  
 Agricultural,  
     Credit, 172  
     Income, estimates of, 178  
     Trends, 163-165  
 Agriculture,  
     Inefficiency, 167-169, 171  
 Ahmedabad, city, 101, 102  
 Ajmere-Merwara, 55  
 Akbar, the Great, 27, 75, 250, 300,  
     318, 335  
 Alexander, the Great, 27  
 Ali, Maulana Mohammad, 246  
 Ali, Shaukat, 353  
 All-India Conference of Medical  
     Research, 106  
 All-India Women's Conference, 129,  
     158, 340  
 Allahabad,  
     City, 258, 268, 278, 294  
     Agricultural Institute, 286, 344  
 Ambedkar, B. R., 354  
 Andaman Islands, 55  
 Andrews, C. F., 349  
 Animism, 239  
 Anklesvar, village, 344  
 Appasammy, poet, 40  
 Architecture,  
     Columns, 294  
     Doorways, 293  
     Indian, 293  
     Walls, 295  
 Art, see Indian Art  
 Art, Mogul, 300, 304  
 Arya Samaj, 129, 232, 238, 241,  
     254, 263  
 Asoka, King, 74, 294  
 Assam, 55, 95  
 Association,  
     Harijan, 354  
     Spinners, 354  
     Village industries, 354  
 Aurangzeb, King, 85, 335  
 Autobus, 34  
 Ayyar, P. V. J., 136, 204, 307  
  
 Babur, King, 27  
 Baby show, 289 (see Ushagram ex-  
     hibition and mela)  
 Baden-Powell, B. H., 91  
 Balfour, Lord, 28  
 Baluchistan, province, 55  
 Bazaar, 92, 187, 192, 194, 196, 214  
 Beard, Charles A., 131  
 Begging, 294  
 Bell, Andrew, 80  
 Benares, city, 185, 217, 268, 270,  
     301, 303  
 Bengal, Presidency, 55, 349  
 Bentinck, Lord William, 81  
 Berar, province, 172  
 Bethune, Drinkwater, 80  
 Bhils, 27  
 Bhotians, see Tibetans  
 Bihar and Orissa, 55, 172  
 Birds, 222  
 Birth and death rates, 198, 199  
 Blunt, 122, 140  
 Boar, the wild, 225  
 Bombay,  
     City, 100, 192, 234, 302, 346  
     Presidency, 55, 176  
 Bose, Sir J. C., 353  
 Bose, Subhas, 353  
 Brahma Samaj, 236, 237, 263, 350  
     (see Brahma Samaj)  
 Brahmins, caste, 116, 128, 139, 204,  
     229, 240, 269, 334  
 Brahma Samaj, 349  
 Brayne, F. L., 107, 260, 343, 346  
 British India, 55  
 British rule in India, history, 58  
 Bubonic plague, 222  
 Buddha, 83, 295, 296  
     Birthplace, 44, 236, 267  
 Buddhism, 236, 294  
 Buddhists, 206, 229, 301  
 Bullock, 32, 150, 188, 193, 211  
 Burma, 55, 95, 238, 268, 302, 343  
 Burmese, 147  
 Burrows, C. B., 71, 306  
 Butterfield, Kenyon L., 208, 343  
  
 Calcutta,  
     City, 101, 108, 150, 254, 264, 268,  
     301, 333  
     School of Tropical Medicine and  
     Hygiene, 77  
 Calvert, H., 343  
 Caravans, 212  
 Carey, William, 254  
 Carving, Indian, 298  
 Caste system, 28, 93, 110, 114, 123,  
     125, 139, 160, 166  
     Changes in, 127  
     Restrictions, 116, 119  
     Taboos, 122  
     Values, 123  
     Vocations, 117  
 Cattle,  
     Contribution to agricultural pro-  
     duction, 171  
     Losses in, 171, 211  
     (see the Indian cow)  
 Cawnpore, city, 101, 102  
 Central Provinces, 55, 172  
 Ceylon, 95, 254, 284, 308, 343, 362  
 Chapman, J. A., 11



- Chaucer, the poet, 267  
 Chaukidar, 61  
 Choudhury, Sudhakanta Roy, 350  
 Christian missionaries, 63, 95, 159, 254  
 Christian missions, 103, 128, 145, 151, 172, 253, 260, 342  
 Churye, 117  
 City and village, economic relations, 99  
 Clark, Robert, 254  
 Clarke, James Freeman, 245  
 Clements, E., 315  
 Clive, Lord Robert, 28, 59  
 Clive's Gate, 59  
 Clothing, 183  
 Commission on Christian Higher Education, 76, 130  
 Communication, means, 62, 65  
 Conjeevram, 185, 301, 308  
 Cooley, Charles H., 114  
 Coomaraswamy, Ananda, 315  
 Cooperative societies, 174  
 Coorg, 55  
 Cornwallis, Lord, 59  
 Courts, 52, 61  
 Cow, veneration of, 216  
 Credit,  
     Agricultural, 172  
     Societies, 175  
 Cressy, Paul F., 99, 108  
 Cromer and Balfour, 178  
 Crooke, Wm., 244, 246, 247, 250  
 Crown, the, 56  
 Cultural heritage, 360  
 Cummings, Sir John, 336, 354  
 Curle, Richard, 303  
 Curricula, Indian School, 83, 85  
 Curzon, Lord, 57, 178  
 Curzon Reforms, 66  
 Custom, rule, 51, 206  
  
 Dalhousie, Lord, 59  
 Dandy, 35  
 Darjeeling,  
     City, 42, 43, 147, 150, 195, 362  
     People, 43  
     Racial elements, 45  
 Darling, M. L., 98, 173, 179, 206, 343  
 Das, Mrs. Sarangadhar, 129, 156, 158, 340, 356  
 Dawson, E., 131  
 Daya Bhaga Law, 54  
 Debt, 172  
 De Forest, Julia, 306  
 Delhi,  
     City, 249, 292, 301, 335  
     Province, 55  
 Depressed classes, 333  
 Devadas, 137, 320  
 DeValois, J. J., see Katpadi Agricultural Institute, Fig. VI  
 Devotional hymns, 323  
 Dialects, number, 29  
  
 Diet, the Indian, 155  
 Disraeli, Benjamin, 359  
 Divorce, 142  
 Dornakal, city, 344  
 Dravidians, 28  
 Duff, Alexander, 254  
 Dung-burning, 213, 214  
 Dutt, C. S., 288  
 Dutt, Romesh, 324  
 Dwellings, 183  
 Dyarchy, 56  
  
 East India Company, 58  
 East Indian Islands, 58  
 Economic gain not primary purpose of land holding, 202  
 Education, village, 111  
 Educational system, historical background, 74  
 Elephant, 224  
 Elizabeth, Queen, 58  
 Encyclopedia Britannica, 114, 235, 243, 294, 296  
 Evangelization, work, 262  
 Everest, Mount, 47, 195  
 Executive Council, 55  
  
 Family, see Indian family  
 Farm income, 178  
 Farquhar, J. N., 138, 239, 263  
 Fergusson, James, 306, 310  
 Financing the government, 64  
 Fisher, George P., 254  
 Foley, Mary Rosengrant, 12, 315  
 Foley, Walter Brooks, 12, 323, 326  
 Folk songs, Indian, 326  
 Food, 182  
     (see diet)  
     Cattle, as source, 215  
 Forrester, J. Campbell, 43, 48  
 Fragmentation of land, 200  
 French and Indian Wars, 58  
 Fry, C. Luther, 262  
 Furneaux, J. H., 71  
 Fysee-Rahamin, Atiya Begum, 315, 316  
  
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 66, 153, 246, 263, 310, 338, 347, 350  
 Ganesha, legend, 39  
 Ganges,  
     River, 263, 278  
     Valley, 42, 345  
 Gardiner, Helen, 295, 296, 298, 308  
 Gardner, Marion B., 11  
 Geographical factors affecting people, 21  
 Ghaziabad, 258  
 Gitanjali, poem by Tagore, 40  
 Gladstone, Wm. E., 359  
 Goheen, J. L., 11  
 Golconda Mines, 149  
 Government of India, 57  
     Units and structures, 55

Governmental incomes and expenditures, 64  
 Gujarat (also Gujarat), 185, 248, 346  
 Gurgaon, 107  
 Guyan sabbha, 24, 109  
  
 Hamilton, Sir Daniel, 95, 345  
 Hardinge, Lord, 59  
 Hare, David, 89  
 Haraha, King, 75, 335  
 Hartford Courant, 111  
 Hastings, Warren, 28, 59  
 Hatch, D. Spencer, 343, 345  
 Hatch, Ira, 11  
 Hatch, Mildred, 279  
 Havell, E. B., 300, 306  
 Health, village, 106  
 Heber, Bishop, 254  
 Hendricks, E. L., 71  
 Hierarchy, caste, 117  
 Higginbottom, Sam, 11, 279  
 Himalayan Mountains, 40, 95, 147, 236, 362  
 Hindi (language), 87  
 Hindu law, 53  
 Hinduism, 129, 239, 276, 292  
     Compared with Christianity, 232  
     Essentials, 232  
     Evaluation, 274  
     Offshoots, 235  
     Types, 230  
 Hindus, 116, 126, 137, 157, 184, 190, 202, 206, 215, 270, 317, 333  
 Hindustani (language), 28, 317  
 Hoare, Sir Samuel, 338  
 Hodge, J. Z., 343  
 Home furnishings, 154  
 Home, see Indian home  
 Hume, Robert E., 11, 229, 234, 250  
 Hun, invasion, 27  
 Huntington, Ellsworth, 23  
 Hyderabad, 249, 302  
 Hyena, 224  
 Hypes, Cora Edna Jackson, 12, 221  
  
 Independent States, 55  
 India,  
     Climate, 21  
     Council Act, 66  
     Physical divisions, 19  
     Racial elements, 28  
     Size and location, 19  
 Indian,  
     Agriculture, 163, 167, 171  
     Art, 291, 301  
     Courts, 52  
     Cow, 211, 216  
     Family, 184, 160  
         Philosophical concepts, 131  
         Socio-economic unit, 134  
     Home, 152, 154, 183  
     Markets, 187  
     Marriage and divorce, 140, 142, 155, 160, 184, 185

Pilgrims, 267  
 Schools, curricula, 83, 85  
 Schools, 68  
 Seasons, 21  
 Statutory Commission Report, 91, 92, 105, 114  
 Travel, romance, 37  
     (see Travelling in India)  
 Village, 89, 91, 105, 162, 174  
     (see Village)  
     Community, 91, 341, 343  
     Origin, 92  
     Physical aspects, 93  
     Recreations and education, 108, 111  
     Welfare Associations, 343  
 Indo-Aryans, 23  
 Indo-China, 58  
 Industrialization, social problems, 100  
 Infant, death rates, 199  
 Inheritance, laws, 52  
 Insects, 221  
 International Missionary Council, 256  
 Irrigation, 171  
 Irwin, Lord, 28  
 Islam in India, 241  
     (see Mohammedanism)  
  
 Jackal, 224  
 Jacks, 180  
 Jainism, 235  
 Jains, 52, 235, 301, 307, 352  
 Jajmani system, 104, 105, 118, 126, 246  
 Joint-family, 143-145  
 Jones, E. Stanley, 358  
 Juggling, 312  
  
 Kamai system, 103  
 Karachi, city, 101, 102  
 Karimpur, 110, 131, 143, 176, 281  
 Karma, 234, 236  
 Kashmere, vale, 362  
 Kashmir Gate, 59  
 Katpadi Agricultural Mission, 40, 120, 344  
 Kinchinjunga Peak, 42  
 Kipling, Rudyard, 361  
 Kochak, T. S., 344, 345  
 Krishna, 321  
 Kropotkin, P. A., 92  
 Kehatriyas, 116  
 Kumbh (or Kumbha) Mela, 279, 280  
  
 Lahore, 101  
 Lamas (or Llamas), Buddhist priests, 112, 204  
 Lancashire, 109  
 Lancaster, 188  
 Languages, diversity in, 29  
 Law,  
     Buddhist, 52, 53



- English, 52  
 English Common, 52  
 Hindu, 52, 53  
 Indian, 51  
 Mohammedan, 52, 53  
 Lawrence, Captain, 43  
 Lawrence, Sir Henry, 59  
 Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry,  
 56, 80, 94, 106, 140, 171, 201,  
 260, 340  
 Legislative Assembly, 56  
 Lepchas, original inhabitants of  
 Darjeeling, 48  
 Lichty, D. J., 11  
 Lindsay Commission, 70, 130, 346  
 Little-Hailes, R., 71  
 London Times, 279  
 Love songs, Indian, 327  
 Lowell, A. L., 131  
 Lübke, Wilhelm, 295, 296, 301  
 Lucknow, city, 249  
 Luther, Martin, 236  
 Lytton, V. A. G. R., 242  
  
 Macaulay, Lord, 80, 81  
 MacDonald, A. A., 300  
 Macnicol, Nicol, 106, 268  
 Madras Presidency, 55, 101, 136,  
 170, 253, 352  
 Madura, 101, 138, 181, 301  
 Magh Mela, 278  
 Mahabharata and Ramayana, 80  
 113, 132, 231, 316  
 Maine, Sir Henry Sumner, 91  
 Malabar Hill, and Malabar, 40, 147,  
 242, 253, 254  
 Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan,  
 353  
 Mann, H. H., 173, 179, 201, 343  
 Manure, as fuel, 213  
 Manu's Code, 53, 115, 230  
 Markets—see Indian markets, ba-  
 zaar, and ahandy  
 Marriage,  
 Ceremonial, 140  
 Coats, 184  
 Forms, 127  
 Mayhew, Arthur, 70, 90, 202, 240,  
 251  
 Mazumder, Nogendra Nath, 23, 74,  
 75, 79, 83, 115, 159  
 McCarrison, Col. R., 77, 215  
 McDougall, 173, 179  
 McKee, Wm. J., 80, 84, 86, 88, 256  
 Mela, 63, 278, 282, 286  
 Military force, 60  
 Miller, Helena F., 12  
 Minto, Lord, 28, 59  
 Mission education, 257  
 (see Schools)  
 Mission of healing, 260  
 Missions, (see Christian missions)  
 History, 253  
 Objectives, 255  
 Mitakshara Law, 53  
  
 Moga, city, 258, 344  
 Mogul,  
 Art, 75, 299, 300, 304  
 Emperors, 27, 75, 85, 149, 300,  
 335  
 Mohammedan,  
 Burial of the dead, 250  
 Food habits and customs of  
 dress, 247  
 Marriage and the family, 247  
 Worship, 245  
 Mohammedanism, 118, 129, 144,  
 151, 229, 241, 268, 335  
 Variants in, 243  
 Mondol, S. K., 287  
 Money lender, private, 176  
 Mongoose, 225  
 Mongolo-Dravidians, 28  
 Mongoloid type, 28  
 Monsoon, 23, 169  
 Montague-Chelmsford Report, 67  
 73, 340  
 Morley-Minto Reforms, 66  
 Mormons, 25, 32  
 Mudaliar, A. Ramaswami, 353  
 Mukerjee, B. B., 342  
 Mukerjee, R., 91, 114, 171, 185  
 Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, 109, 112,  
 141, 218  
 Mukthiyar, 179  
 Müller, Max, 53  
 Murray, John, 200, 306, 307  
 Music of India, 315  
 Contrasted with western music,  
 322  
 What the people sing, 323  
 Musical instruments, of India, 321  
  
 Nagpur, city, 46, 100, 120, 195, 346  
 Naidu, Surojini, 327, 341  
 Nair, P. D., 144  
 Naoroji, Dadabhai, 178, 179  
 Napier, Sir Charles, 60  
 Natarajan, K., 159, 349  
 National Christian Council, 100,  
 343  
 National Congress Party, 57  
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 353  
 Neill, Stephen, 100, 115, 209  
 Nepalese, 46  
 Nicobar Islands, 55  
 Nivedita, Sister, 207  
 North Arcot, 139  
 Northwest Frontier Province, 55  
  
 Oaten, E. F., 82  
 Olcott, Mason, 71, 88, 89, 290, 361  
 Ongole, city, 258  
 Oudh, province, 55, 185  
 Oxford University Press, 201  
  
 Padakalpataru, poem, 328  
 Pagodas, 303, 308  
 Painting, Indian, 299  
 Panchayat, 62, 258

Parliamentary Commission, 67  
 Parsees (also Parsis) 27, 40, 239, 352  
 Patel, Vallabhai, 353  
 People of India, 28, 28  
 Petty, Orville A., 283, 264  
 Phallic dances, 137  
 Pickett, J. Waskom, 262  
 Pilgrims, 267  
 Plague, see bubonic plague  
 Police force, 60  
 Pondicherry, port, 58, 336  
 Poona, city, 158, 344  
 Popley, H. A., 315  
 Population, of India  
     Born outside cities, 102  
     Ethnic composition, 28  
     Number, 26  
     Pressure on the land, 165, 197  
     Sex ratio in cities, 101  
 Postal and telegraph service, 63  
 Post office savings bank, 63  
 Pottery-making, 311  
 Poverty, effects on schools, 88  
 Princes, Chamber of, 57  
 Problems of Indian society, 172,  
     180, 184, 195, 200, 202, 203,  
     204, 357  
 Punjab, province, 55, 86, 107, 147,  
     170, 236, 342  
 Punjabi (language), 87  
 Purdah, 35, 129, 159, 160  
 Pyre, funeral, 273  
 Pythagoras, 235  
  
 Radhakrishnan, S., 230, 240, 352  
 Raga, 317  
 Rahim, Sir Abdur, 353  
 Rai, Lala Lajpat, 355, 356  
 Railways, cheap third-class rates,  
     32  
 Railway,  
     Finances, 65  
     Mileage, 31,  
     Passenger service, 31  
 Rain gods, 23  
 Raman, Sir C. V., 77, 353  
 Ramtek,  
     Mela, 282  
     Temple, 39, 268  
 Rangoon, 40, 101, 102  
 Ranipet, 188, 261  
 Rao, H. P., 315  
 Reconstruction, village, 341  
     (see Social Reconstruction)  
 Recreation, 108  
     (see Education)  
 Reddi, Muthulakshmi, 156, 341  
 Religion and custom, 206  
 Religious census, 228  
 Reptiles, 223  
 Research and higher education, 77  
 Reserved powers, 55  
 Re-Thinking Missions, 264  
 Rickshaw, 35

Risley, 28  
 Rivers, W. H. R., 117  
 Round Table Conferences, 57, 334,  
     337, 339, 353  
 Roy, Ram Mohan, 80, 237  
 Roy, Sir C. P., 353  
 Royal Commission on Agriculture  
     (Report), 71, 97, 101, 107, 166,  
     171, 175  
 Rugg, H. O., 202  
 Rural reconstruction 341, 342  
 Russell and Lal, 116, 117  
 Ryotwari system, 96  
  
 Sacred Books of the East, 53  
 Saddler Commission, 71  
 Salvation Army, 342  
 Sapru, Sir Tej, 353  
 Sarda Act, 157, 340  
 Sastri, Rt. Hon. V. S. S., 353  
 Saunders, A. J., 107, 145, 176, 181,  
     200  
 Schools,  
     Classification, 69  
     Elementary, 78  
     Indian, 68  
     Mission, 257  
     Organization and support, 72, 73  
     Recognized, 68  
 Scouts and scouting, 289  
 Scudder, Galen F., see Scudder  
     Memorial Hospital,  
     Fig. XXIV.  
 Scudder, Ida, see travelling road-  
     side dispensary, Fig. XXIV.  
 Scudder Memorial Hospital, 261  
 Sculpture, Indian, 296  
 Scythia-Dravidians, 28  
 Segmentation (caste), 117  
 Semi-pastoral system of farming,  
     203  
 Sepoy Mutiny, 59, 335  
 Seven Years' War, 58  
 Shah Jahan, 28, 75, 149, 306  
 Shah and Khambatta, 178, 179  
 Shandy, 63, 92, 187, 189, 190, 212  
 Shirras 178  
 Sholapur, city, 100, 101, 102  
 Shwe Dagon Pagoda, 303  
 Shan-Kar, Uday, 110  
 Sikhs, 52, 229, 236, 249, 301, 335  
 Sikhism 236  
 Simon Commission, 340  
 Simon, Sir John, 67  
 Sindh, division, 170  
 Sipple, Leslie B., 68, 259  
 Sittber, T. S., 264  
 Social conflict, 205  
 Social occasions, cost, 184, 185  
 Social reconstruction among Indian  
     villages, 341  
     Rural reconstruction unit, 342  
     Types, 344  
 Social problems, see problems of  
     Indian society



- Social reform movements, 333  
 Standards of living, 180  
   Clothing, 183  
   Dwellings, 183  
   Food, 182  
 Stoddard, 306  
 Statesman's Year Book, 197, 198  
 St. Paul, 253  
 Strickland, C. F., 343  
 St. Thomas, 253  
 Stupa, Buddhist, 301  
 Subdivision of land, see fragmentation of land  
 Sub-Inspector of police, 60  
 Sudras, 116  
 Suttas, 157, 327  
 Swaraj movement, 334  
 Swarajists, 56, 108, 159, 334, 337  
  
 Taboos, caste, 122  
 Tagore, Babu Debendra Nath, 237  
 Tagore, Rabindranath (the poet), 40, 132, 158, 207, 290, 318, 345, 354  
 Taj Mahal, 28, 113, 287, 301, 304  
 Tala, 320  
 Tamerlane, 27  
 Tamil, 139  
 Tanjore Pagoda, 301  
 Taxation, 96  
 Tea-growing, 44  
 Temples,  
   Dravidian, 307  
   Hindu, 306  
   Indian, 301  
 Termites, 220  
 Thana, 60  
 Thurston and Rangachari, 116, 133, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 156, 247  
 Tibetans, 46  
 Tiger, 225  
 Tipping, 36  
 Tokyo, 100  
 Tonga, 33  
 Towers of Silence, 40  
 Transferred powers, 55  
 Travelling in India, 30  
   Means, 31  
   Problems, 36  
 Tukaram, the poet, 40  
 Turko-Iranians, 23  
  
 Unemployment, rural, 97  
 United Provinces, 55, 344  
 Units and structures of government, 55  
  
 Universities and colleges, 69, 70, 74, 75, 258, 352  
 University of North Carolina Press, 80  
 Urdu (language), 87  
 Ushagram,  
   Exhibition and mela, 285  
   Mission, 258, 285, 289, 344  
  
 Vaghdeo, 27  
 Vaisya, 116  
 Van Doren, A. B., 71, 343  
 Vedic Period, 116  
   Religion, 230  
 Viceroy, powers, 56, 70  
 Victoria, Queen, 149  
 Village,  
   Health, 106  
   Holdings, 95  
   Homes, 94  
   Industries, 98, 346  
   Labor systems, 103  
   Recreation, 108  
 Village life,  
   Economic aspects, 95  
   Social aspects, 106  
  
 Wadia and Joshi, 165, 178, 180  
 Wages, 168  
 Wajib-ul-arz, of Karimpur, 96  
 Wampler, Fred J., 260  
 Weaving, 311  
 Wellington, Duke of, 59  
 Wild animals and insects, 220, 222, 223  
 Williams, F. G., 285, 286  
 Williams, Monier, 121  
 Wilson, John, 254  
 Wilson, Warren H., 103, 104, 108, 202  
 Wiser, Wm. H., 53, 94, 104, 115, 125, 137, 143, 159, 177, 281, 343  
 Wood, Sir Charles, 81  
 Woodsmall, Ruth, 340  
 Women of India, 146  
   Dress, 146  
   Jewelry, 148  
   Property rights, 168  
   Work, 150  
 Women's movement, 340  
 Xavier, François de, 254  
 Yeotmal, 120, 344  
 Y. M. C. A., 259, 342, 345, 346  
 Zamindars, 25, 95, 96, 97  
 Zimand, Savel, 155, 157, 209, 234, 242, 281  
 Zoroastrianism, 239





